EVERYBODY IS STUPID EXCEPT FOR ME

AND OTHER ASTUTE OBSERVATIONS

A DECADE'S WORTH OF CARTOON REPORTING FOR REASON MAGAZINE

EVERYBODY IS STUPID EXCEPT FOR ME

AND OTHER ASTUTE OBSERVATIONS

A DECADE'S WORTH OF CARTOON REPORTING FOR REASON MAGAZINE

PETER BAGGE

POWER FANTASIES FOR THE HYPER-SENSITIVE
RC
REASON COMICS™
NO.1473
APR-MAY
TALES OF THE EXPLOITED
10¢
($10.00 IN CANADA)
APPROVED BY THE BITTER PILL SOCIETY
NOT SO FAST, "PULP KING"!
CURSES! CAUGHT RED-HANDED!
XXX
IN THIS ISSUE:
WORK-FOR-HIRE MAN
SETTLES AN OLD SCORE
P. BAGGE '01 REYNOLDS

CONTENTS

4 The Other "L" Word
5 Introduction

WAR

8 Observations From a Reluctant Anti-Warrior
12 The War on Terror Never Ends
13 The Right to Own a Bazooka
17 Confessions of a Lazy Anti-Warrior

SEX

20 Swingers of the World, Unite!
24 The War on Fornication

ARTS

30 Just Say No to Live Clarinets
31 Now *That's* Entertainment!
32 "Real" "Art"
36 Christian Rock
40 Sluts For Jesus
41 The Life Cycle of a Hack

BUSINESS

44 Malls
48 Just Say No to Intellectual Property!
49 Your Friendly Neighborhood Tyrant
50 Everyone's a Winner!
54 Latin Laissez-Faire
55 Fine Dining at Shell

BOONDOGGLES

58 My Very Own Monorail
62 Let's All Give Money to the Rich Man!
66 Amtrak Sucks

TRAGEDY

72 A Menace to Society
76 The Beast That Will Not Die
80 Bums

POLITICS

86 In Search of… an Honest Republican
90 Confessions of a Serial President Hater
91 Let Us Deliberate…
92 Playing to the Totalitarian Left
93 Fascists Have Feelings, Too
94 Taking Out Arnold… One Soundbite at a Time
95 In Search of… the Perfect Human
99 When Libertarians Gather…

OUR STUPID COUNTRY

102 Who's to Blame for 9/11?
103 Ex-Pats Say the Darnedest Things
104 Junkie Logic
105 Celebrate Diversity
106 Do Your Own Thing Unto Others
107 Acts of Contrition
108 Principal Stalin
109 Fair-Weather Idealists
110 …Or Don't You Care?
111 The Nerd-ification of America
112 Let's Talk About Sex
113 What We Believe
117 What We Believe (This Month, Anyway)
118 In Praise of Meaningless Crap

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE OTHER "L" WORD
AS OVERHEARD BY PETER BAGGE ©2001
SERIOUSLY, PETER, WHEN WILL YOU GET OVER THIS NAIVE NOTION THAT MOST PEOPLE ARE ABLE TO TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES?
...HA HA HA...
I HAVE A LOT OF LIBERTARIAN FRIENDS, AND I'D EVEN BE ONE MYSELF...
...ONLY I'M IN FAVOR OF ROADS.
HA HA HA HA HA HA
MY PROBLEM WITH YOU LIBERTARIANS IS NOT JUST THAT YOU WANT TO LEGALIZE DRUGS AND PROSTITUTION...
BUT YOU ALSO REFUSE TO ADMIT THAT YOU'RE CONSERVATIVES!
BUSH/CHENEY 2000
CHOOSE LIFE
NATIONAL REVIEW
G.O.P.
THIS CALLER IS A LIBERTARIAN, EH?
I DON'T WASTE MY TIME TALKING TO PEOPLE WHO OBSESS OVER BLACK HELICOPTERS!
HA-HA! NEXT!
DOWNSIZE THIS!
WHAT? =CLICK=
I REFUSE TO BELIEVE YOU'RE A LIBERTARIAN...
I MEAN, YOU DON'T EVEN OWN A GUN!
?
=GASP!= YOU'RE A LIBERTARIAN?
YOU MEAN YOU WORK FOR THAT LYNDON LAROUCHE GUY?

INTRODUCTION

When Peter Bagge started doing comics for *Reason*, the magazine of "Free Minds and Free Markets," in 2001, he immediately became one of our very most popular authors, both in print and online. That's not surprising in the least.

As the creator of *Hate* and other awesome chronicles of the past quarter-century of American life, Peter brought a huge audience with him. And as a balls-out libertarian who believes in free speech, drug legalization, and "the right to own a bazooka" (among many other inalienable rights), he brought a very different way of thinking about politics—and comics—to *Reason* readers and beyond.

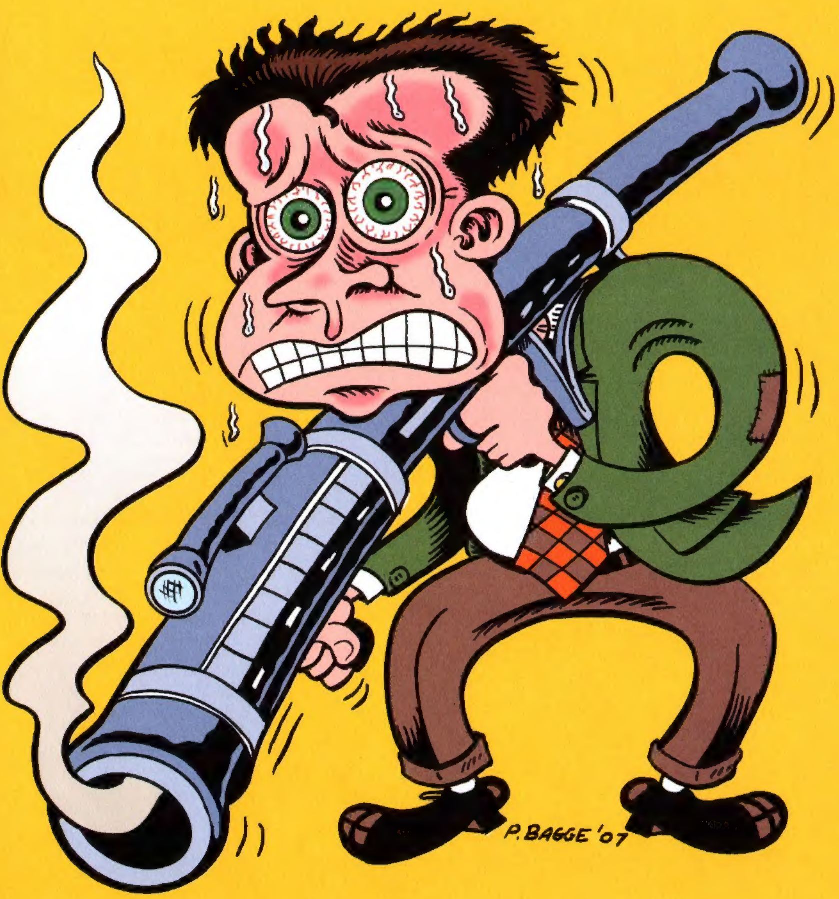
As *The Washington Post* wrote of Peter a while back, "Like all good political cartoonists, Bagge can be cruel. But he's also willing to skewer himself when he deserves it. Shortly before the United States invaded Iraq in 2003, Bagge, who opposed the invasion, covered an antiwar rally and drew a cartoon called *Observations From a Reluctant Anti-Warrior*, a savage mockery of the pretensions of the protesters. A year later, haunted by what he termed 'a deep sense of shame' about that cartoon, he drew *Confessions of a Lazy Anti-Warrior*, eviscerating himself for attacking the protesters."

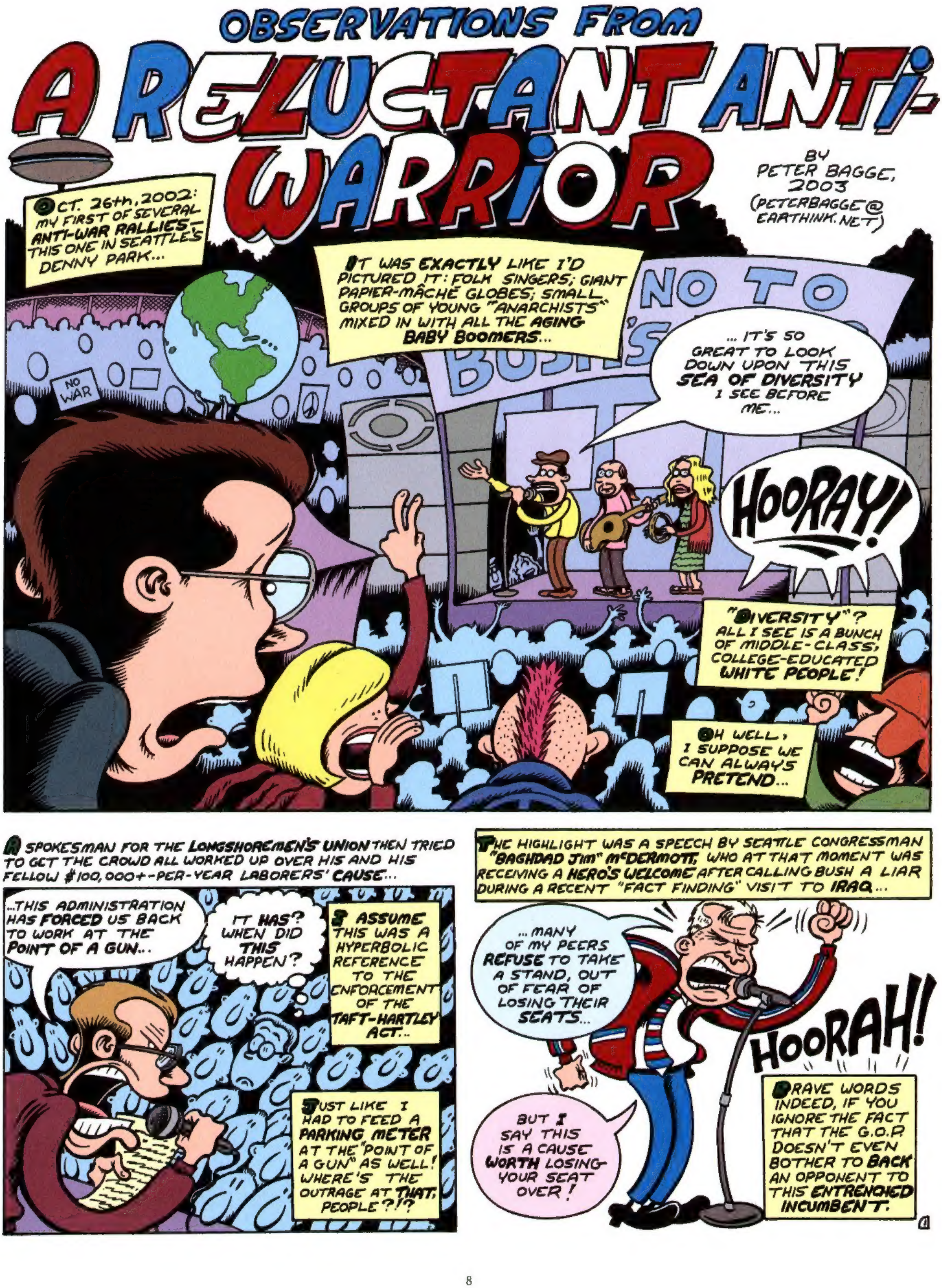
Both of those instant classics are in this collection, along with pieces skewering the pretensions of publicly funded artists, fuddy-duddy social conservatives, rich bastards who bilk taxpayers for grandiose sports stadiums, and much, much more. The best part of Peter's work is that it makes you think, whether you agree with him or not. And it makes you laugh, whether you want to or not. This world is woefully short on thinking and laughs, which makes Peter nothing less than an international treasure.

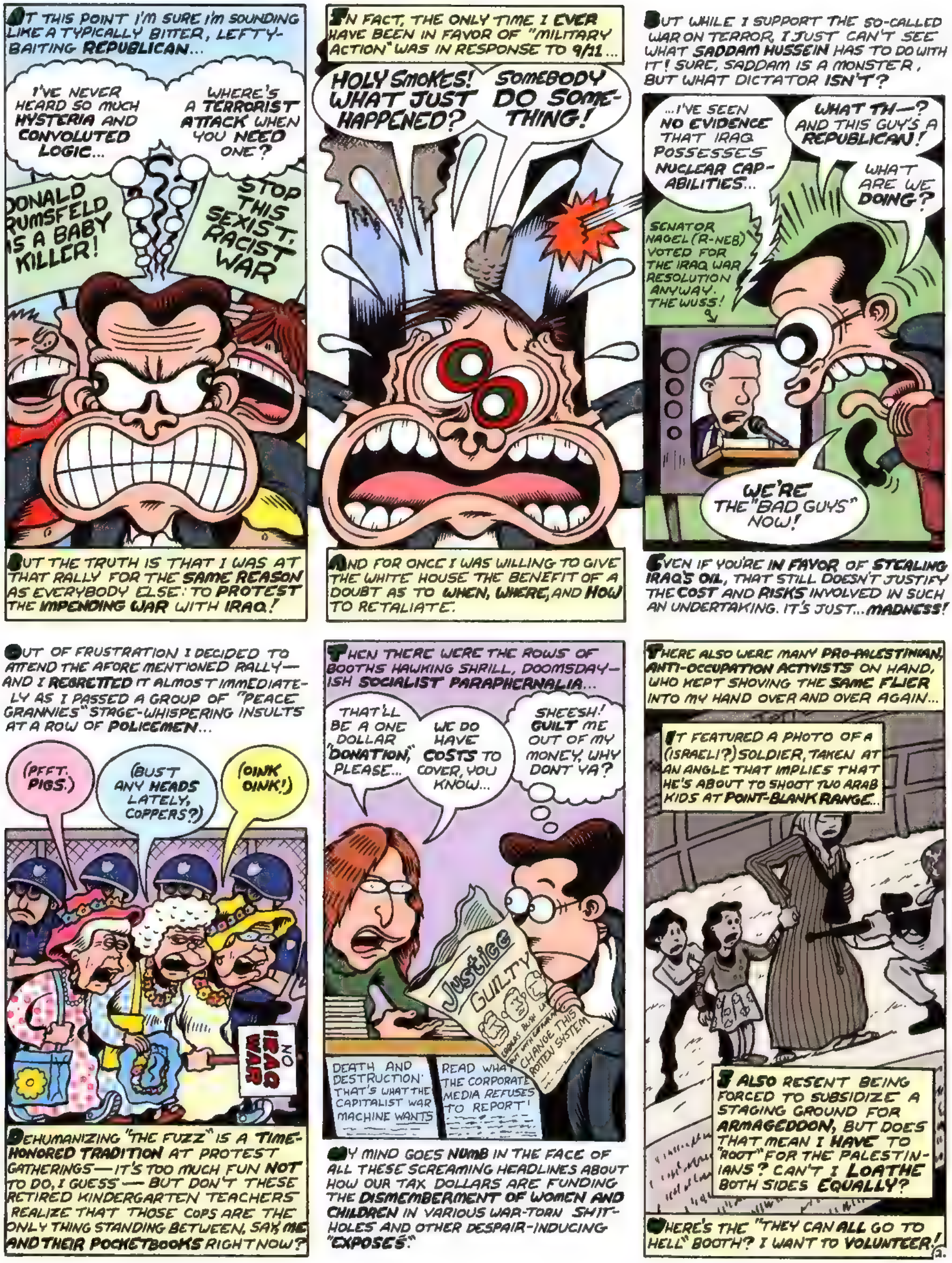
NICK GILLESPIE

Editor in Chief, Reason.tv
and Reason.com

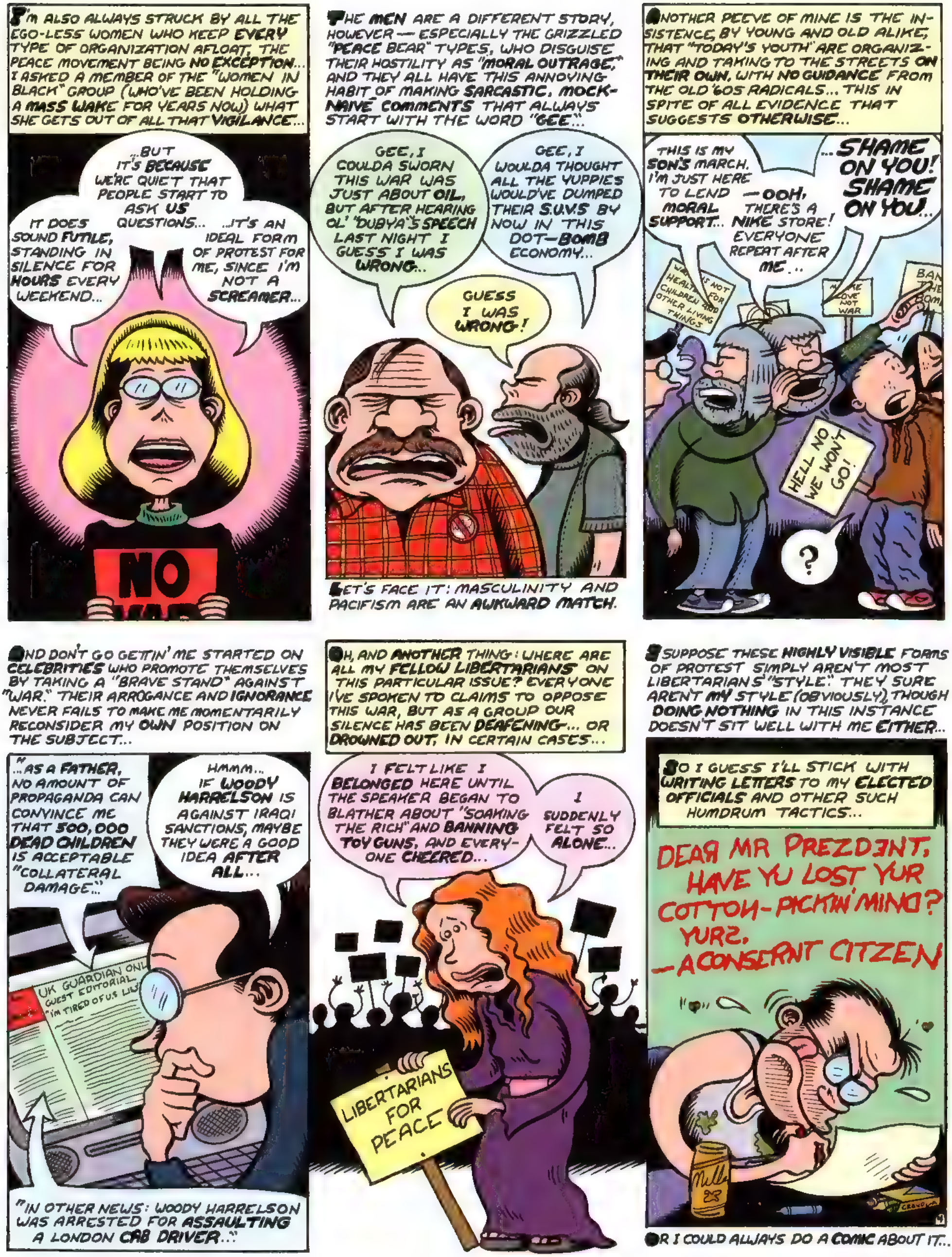
STUPID
WAR


P. BAGGE '07


OBSERVATIONS FROM
A RELUCTANT ANTI-WARRIOR
BY PETER BAGGE, 2003 (PETERBAGGE@EARTHINK.NET)
OCT. 26th, 2002: MY FIRST OF SEVERAL ANTI-WAR RALLIES— THIS ONE IN SEATTLE'S DENNY PARK...
IT WAS EXACTLY LIKE I'D PICTURED IT: FOLK SINGERS; GIANT PAPIER-MÂCHÉ GLOBES; SMALL GROUPS OF YOUNG "ANARCHISTS" MIXED IN WITH ALL THE AGING BABY BOOMERS...
NO TO BUSH'S
NO WAR
...IT'S SO GREAT TO LOOK DOWN UPON THIS SEA OF DIVERSITY I SEE BEFORE ME...
HOORAY!
"DIVERSITY"? ALL I SEE IS A BUNCH OF MIDDLE-CLASS, COLLEGE-EDUCATED WHITE PEOPLE!
OH WELL, I SUPPOSE WE CAN ALWAYS PRETEND...
A SPOKESMAN FOR THE LONGSHOREMEN'S UNION THEN TRIED TO GET THE CROWD ALL WORKED UP OVER HIS AND HIS FELLOW $100,000+-PER-YEAR LABORERS' CAUSE...
...THIS ADMINISTRATION HAS FORCED US BACK TO WORK AT THE POINT OF A GUN...
IT HAS? WHEN DID THIS HAPPEN?
I ASSUME THIS WAS A HYPERBOLIC REFERENCE TO THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE TAFT-HARTLEY ACT...
JUST LIKE I HAD TO FEED A PARKING METER AT THE "POINT OF A GUN" AS WELL! WHERE'S THE OUTRAGE AT THAT, PEOPLE?!?
THE HIGHLIGHT WAS A SPEECH BY SEATTLE CONGRESSMAN "BAGHDAD JIM" McDERMOTT, WHO AT THAT MOMENT WAS RECEIVING A HERO'S WELCOME AFTER CALLING BUSH A LIAR DURING A RECENT "FACT FINDING" VISIT TO IRAQ...
...MANY OF MY PEERS REFUSE TO TAKE A STAND, OUT OF FEAR OF LOSING THEIR SEATS...
HOORAH!
BUT I SAY THIS IS A CAUSE WORTH LOSING YOUR SEAT OVER!
BRAVE WORDS INDEED, IF YOU IGNORE THE FACT THAT THE G.O.P. DOESN'T EVEN BOTHER TO BACK AN OPPONENT TO THIS ENTRENCHED INCUMBENT.
1

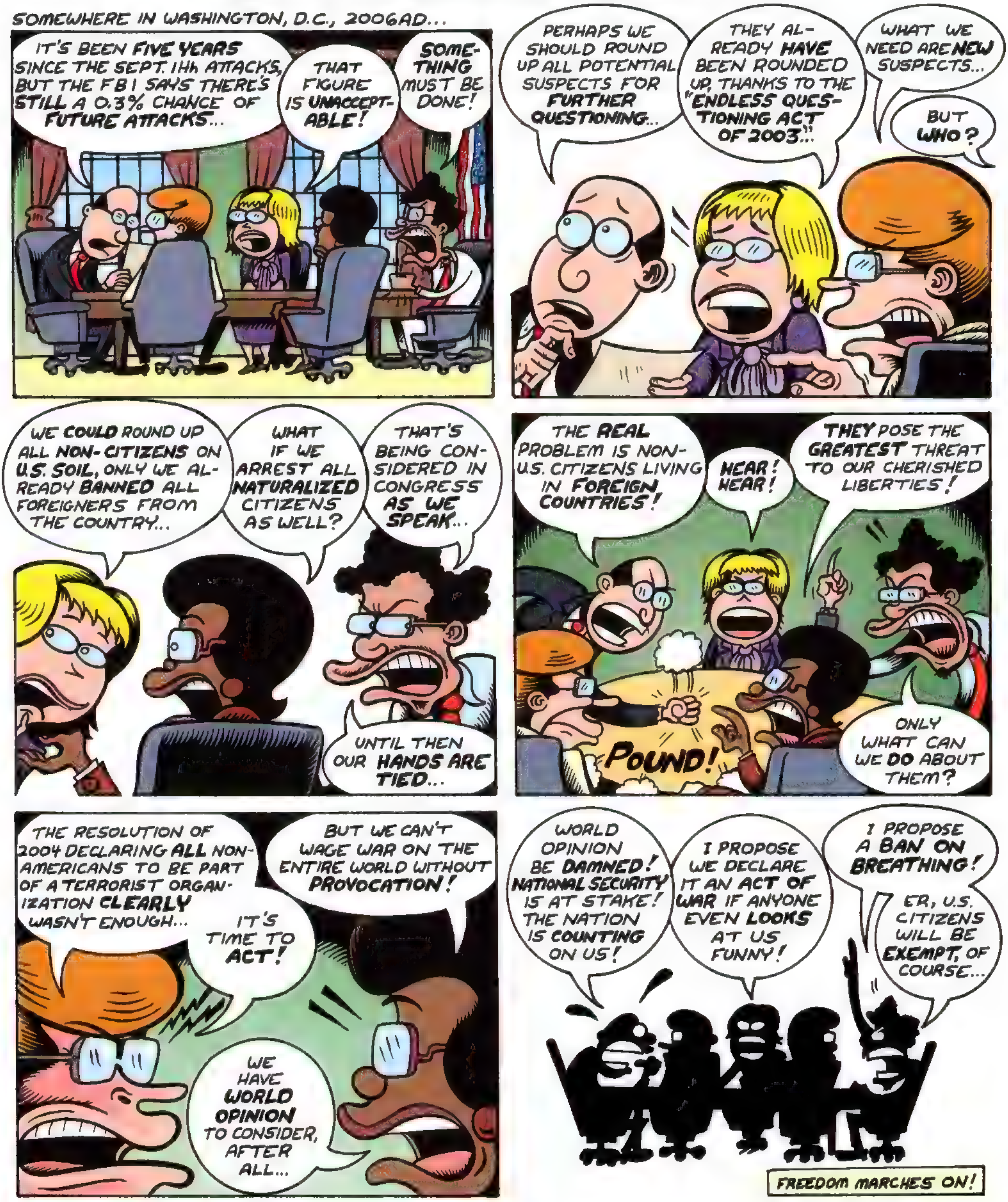

AT THIS POINT I'M SURE I'M SOUNDING LIKE A TYPICALLY BITTER, LEFTY-BAITING REPUBLICAN...
I'VE NEVER HEARD SO MUCH HYSTERIA AND CONVOLUTED LOGIC...
WHERE'S A TERRORIST ATTACK WHEN YOU NEED ONE?
DONALD RUMSFELD IS A BABY KILLER!
STOP THIS SEXIST, RACIST WAR
BUT THE TRUTH IS THAT I WAS AT THAT RALLY FOR THE SAME REASON AS EVERYBODY ELSE: TO PROTEST THE IMPENDING WAR WITH IRAQ!
IN FACT, THE ONLY TIME I EVER HAVE BEEN IN FAVOR OF "MILITARY ACTION" WAS IN RESPONSE TO 9/11...
HOLY SMOKES! WHAT JUST HAPPENED?
SOMEBODY DO SOMETHING!
AND FOR ONCE I WAS WILLING TO GIVE THE WHITE HOUSE THE BENEFIT OF A DOUBT AS TO WHEN, WHERE, AND HOW TO RETALIATE.
BUT WHILE I SUPPORT THE SO-CALLED WAR ON TERROR, I JUST CAN'T SEE WHAT SADDAM HUSSEIN HAS TO DO WITH IT! SURE, SADDAM IS A MONSTER, BUT WHAT DICTATOR ISN'T?
...I'VE SEEN NO EVIDENCE THAT IRAQ POSSESSES NUCLEAR CAPABILITIES...
WHAT TH—? AND THIS GUY'S A REPUBLICAN!
WHAT ARE WE DOING?
SENATOR NAGEL (R-NEB) VOTED FOR THE IRAQ WAR RESOLUTION ANYWAY. THE WUSS!
WE'RE THE "BAD GUYS" NOW!
EVEN IF YOU'RE IN FAVOR OF STEALING IRAQ'S OIL, THAT STILL DOESN'T JUSTIFY THE COST AND RISKS INVOLVED IN SUCH AN UNDERTAKING. IT'S JUST...MADNESS!
OUT OF FRUSTRATION I DECIDED TO ATTEND THE AFOREMENTIONED RALLY—AND I REGRETTED IT ALMOST IMMEDIATELY AS I PASSED A GROUP OF "PEACE GRANNIES" STAGE-WHISPERING INSULTS AT A ROW OF POLICEMEN...
(PFFT. PIGS.)
(BUST ANY HEADS LATELY, COPPERS?)
(OINK OINK!)
NO IRAQ WAR
DEHUMANIZING "THE FUZZ" IS A TIME-HONORED TRADITION AT PROTEST GATHERINGS—IT'S TOO MUCH FUN NOT TO DO, I GUESS—BUT DON'T THESE RETIRED KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS REALIZE THAT THOSE COPS ARE THE ONLY THING STANDING BETWEEN, SAY, ME AND THEIR POCKETBOOKS RIGHT NOW?
THEN THERE WERE THE ROWS OF BOOTHS HAWKING SHRILL, DOOMSDAY-ISH SOCIALIST PARAPHERNALIA...
THAT'LL BE A ONE DOLLAR "DONATION," PLEASE...
WE DO HAVE COSTS TO COVER, YOU KNOW...
SHEESH! GUILT ME OUT OF MY MONEY, WHY DONT YA?
Justice
GUILTY
CHANGE THIS ROTTEN SYSTEM
DEATH AND DESTRUCTION: THAT'S WHAT THE CAPITALIST WAR MACHINE WANTS
READ WHAT THE CORPORATE MEDIA REFUSES TO REPORT!
MY MIND GOES NUMB IN THE FACE OF ALL THESE SCREAMING HEADLINES ABOUT HOW OUR TAX DOLLARS ARE FUNDING THE DISMEMBERMENT OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN VARIOUS WAR-TORN SHIT-HOLES AND OTHER DESPAIR-INDUCING "EXPOSÉS."
THERE ALSO WERE MANY PRO-PALESTINIAN, ANTI-OCCUPATION ACTIVISTS ON HAND, WHO KEPT SHOVING THE SAME FLIER INTO MY HAND OVER AND OVER AGAIN...
IT FEATURED A PHOTO OF A (ISRAELI?) SOLDIER, TAKEN AT AN ANGLE THAT IMPLIES THAT HE'S ABOUT TO SHOOT TWO ARAB KIDS AT POINT-BLANK RANGE...
I ALSO RESENT BEING FORCED TO SUBSIDIZE A STAGING GROUND FOR ARMAGEDDON, BUT DOES THAT MEAN I HAVE TO "ROOT" FOR THE PALESTINIANS? CAN'T I LOATHE BOTH SIDES EQUALLY?
WHERE'S THE "THEY CAN ALL GO TO HELL" BOOTH? I WANT TO VOLUNTEER!

WHAT DO ANY OF THESE PET ISSUES HAVE TO DO WITH A WAR IN IRAQ, ANYWAY? WHAT ARE ALL THESE "PIGGYBACKERS" DOING HERE (BESIDES GETTING ON MY NERVES, THAT IS)? SHOULDN'T WE BE STICKING TO THE MATTER AT HAND?!?
PALESTINE INFORMATION PROJECT
VOT COMMU
CITIZENS IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE OF EL SALVADOR
VEGAN OUT-REACH
EAS TIMO ACTIO NETWO
I ASKED AN ORGANIZER FROM THE "NOT IN OUR NAME" COMMITTEE THIS VERY QUESTION. HE REPLIED THAT "JOB ONE" WAS GETTING PEOPLE TO SHOW UP AT ALL, AND THAT HE'S NOT GOING TO SPURN ANYONE WHO SHOWS UP WITH A SEPARATE CAUSE IN TOW.
HE ALSO MADE THE FOLLOWING SUGGESTION:
YOU SHOULD ATTEND A "S.N.O.W."* MEETING. THEY'RE ALL OLDER, CHURCH-Y TYPES...
THEY'RE ALSO THE REAL ORGANIZING FORCE BEHIND THE LOCAL ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT...
HUH. SOUNDS BORING, BUT OKAY.
*"SOUND NATIVES OPPOSED TO WAR"
I SOON FOUND MYSELF IN A CHURCH BASEMENT SURROUNDED BY GRAYING PETER, PAUL + MARY FANS. AND I WAS RIGHT: IT WAS BORING! STILL, I WAS IMPRESSED WITH THE WAY THOSE FOLKS HAD THIS WHOLE "PROTEST" ROUTINE DOWN PAT...
...A FEW OF OUR OLDER FRIENDS HAVE REQUESTED FOLDING CHAIRS FOR NEXT WEEK'S SIT-IN...
INSTRUCTIONS ON WHAT TO DO IN CASE YOU GET ARRESTED CAN BE FOUND NEXT TO THE COFFEE MAKER...
AGENDA
7:00: INTRODUC
7:15: REVIEW OF
IT'S NOT SURPRISING, THEN, THAT THESE PROTESTS USUALLY FEEL RATHER SCRIPTED — LIKE THIS ONE MARCH THROUGH DOWNTOWN STAGED BY A GROUP OF HOOKY-PLAYING COLLEGE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS...
NO BLOOD FOR OIL!
OH, LOOK! HOW CUTE!
DON'T TRASH THE STARBUCKS, KIDS! HA HA!
I HOPE I DON'T GET GROUNDED FOR THIS!
RIDE A BIKE INSTEAD
BON MARCHÉ
ALL THE PASSERSBY SEEMED TO BE GIVING THEM THE THUMBS-UP FOR THEIR CUTENESS FACTOR ALONE. IT WAS LIKE A LI'L HIPPIE CHRISTMAS PAGEANT!
THESE PROTESTS ATTRACT A WIDE VARIETY OF HARMLESS NUTS AS WELL — LIKE THE "CLOWNS AND WIZARDS FOR PEACE," WHO INCLUDED AN ELDERLY CLOWN IN A WHEELCHAIR WHO KEPT INSISTING THAT SHE WAS A BABY...
I'M A BABY CLOWN! CAN YOU TELL ME HOW TO BE A GROWN-UP CLOWN ONE DAY?
I, UH, HAVE NO IDEA...
CAN YOU DESIGN A WEB SITE FOR US?
LIVE WITH A KIND HEART
THEIR MOTTO
SUCH DISPLAYS OF WILLFUL NAIVETÉ ARE VERY TYPICAL AMONG PACIFISTS, SADLY.
IN FACT, EVERY ARCHETYPE IMAGINABLE COMES OUT OF THE WOODWORK AT THESE EVENTS, EACH ONE PLAYING THEIR "ROLE" TO THE HILT — LIKE THIS ONE MULLETHEAD, WHO RIGHT ON CUE CONFRONTED A GROUP OF MARCHERS TO DECLARE:
HEY, I'M FOR PEACE, TOO...
NUKE SADDAM!
THESE COLORS DON'T RUN
3


I'M ALSO ALWAYS STRUCK BY ALL THE EGO-LESS WOMEN WHO KEEP EVERY TYPE OF ORGANIZATION AFLOAT, THE PEACE MOVEMENT BEING NO EXCEPTION... I ASKED A MEMBER OF THE "WOMEN IN BLACK" GROUP (WHO'VE BEEN HOLDING A MASS WAKE FOR YEARS NOW) WHAT SHE GETS OUT OF ALL THAT VIGILANCE...
IT DOES SOUND FUTILE, STANDING IN SILENCE FOR HOURS EVERY WEEKEND...
...BUT IT'S BECAUSE WE'RE QUIET THAT PEOPLE START TO ASK US QUESTIONS...
...IT'S AN IDEAL FORM OF PROTEST FOR ME, SINCE I'M NOT A SCREAMER...
NO
THE MEN ARE A DIFFERENT STORY, HOWEVER — ESPECIALLY THE GRIZZLED "PEACE BEAR" TYPES, WHO DISGUISE THEIR HOSTILITY AS "MORAL OUTRAGE," AND THEY ALL HAVE THIS ANNOYING HABIT OF MAKING SARCASTIC, MOCK-NAIVE COMMENTS THAT ALWAYS START WITH THE WORD "GEE"...
GEE, I COULDA SWORN THIS WAR WAS JUST ABOUT OIL, BUT AFTER HEARING OL' "DUBYA"'S SPEECH LAST NIGHT I GUESS I WAS WRONG...
GEE, I WOULDA THOUGHT ALL THE YUPPIES WOULD'VE DUMPED THEIR S.U.V.S BY NOW IN THIS DOT-BOMB ECONOMY...
GUESS I WAS WRONG!
LET'S FACE IT: MASCULINITY AND PACIFISM ARE AN AWKWARD MATCH.
ANOTHER PEEVE OF MINE IS THE INSISTENCE, BY YOUNG AND OLD ALIKE, THAT "TODAY'S YOUTH" ARE ORGANIZING AND TAKING TO THE STREETS ON THEIR OWN, WITH NO GUIDANCE FROM THE OLD '60S RADICALS... THIS IN SPITE OF ALL EVIDENCE THAT SUGGESTS OTHERWISE...
THIS IS MY SON'S MARCH. I'M JUST HERE TO LEND MORAL SUPPORT...
—OOH, THERE'S A NIKE STORE! EVERYONE REPEAT AFTER ME...
...SHAME ON YOU! SHAME ON YOU...
HEALTH IS NOT FOR CHILDREN AND OTHER LIVING THINGS
HELL NO WE WON'T GO!
?
AND DON'T GO GETTIN' ME STARTED ON CELEBRITIES WHO PROMOTE THEMSELVES BY TAKING A "BRAVE STAND" AGAINST "WAR." THEIR ARROGANCE AND IGNORANCE NEVER FAILS TO MAKE ME MOMENTARILY RECONSIDER MY OWN POSITION ON THE SUBJECT...
"...AS A FATHER, NO AMOUNT OF PROPAGANDA CAN CONVINCE ME THAT 500,000 DEAD CHILDREN IS ACCEPTABLE "COLLATERAL DAMAGE.""
HMMM... IF WOODY HARRELSON IS AGAINST IRAQI SANCTIONS, MAYBE THEY WERE A GOOD IDEA AFTER ALL...
UK GUARDIAN ONL GUEST EDITORIAL "I'M TIRED OF U.S. LIES"
"IN OTHER NEWS: WOODY HARRELSON WAS ARRESTED FOR ASSAULTING A LONDON CAB DRIVER..."
OH, AND ANOTHER THING: WHERE ARE ALL MY FELLOW LIBERTARIANS ON THIS PARTICULAR ISSUE? EVERYONE I'VE SPOKEN TO CLAIMS TO OPPOSE THIS WAR, BUT AS A GROUP OUR SILENCE HAS BEEN DEAFENING... OR DROWNED OUT, IN CERTAIN CASES...
I FELT LIKE I BELONGED HERE UNTIL THE SPEAKER BEGAN TO BLATHER ABOUT "SOAKING THE RICH" AND BANNING TOY GUNS, AND EVERYONE CHEERED...
I SUDDENLY FELT SO ALONE...
LIBERTARIANS FOR PEACE
I SUPPOSE THESE HIGHLY VISIBLE FORMS OF PROTEST SIMPLY AREN'T MOST LIBERTARIANS' "STYLE." THEY SURE AREN'T MY STYLE (OBVIOUSLY), THOUGH DOING NOTHING IN THIS INSTANCE DOESN'T SIT WELL WITH ME EITHER...
SO I GUESS I'LL STICK WITH WRITING LETTERS TO MY ELECTED OFFICIALS AND OTHER SUCH HUMDRUM TACTICS...
DEAR MR PREZDENT, HAVE YU LOST YUR COTTON-PICKIN' MIND? YURZ, —A CONSERNT CITZEN
OR I COULD ALWAYS DO A COMIC ABOUT IT...

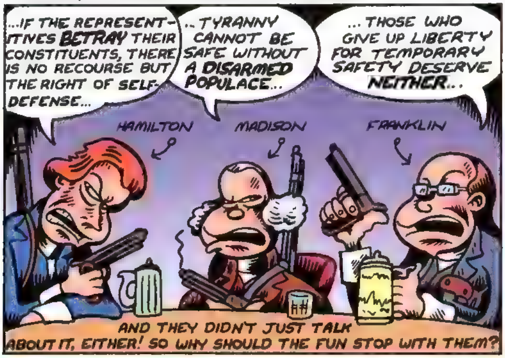
THE WAR ON TERROR NEVER ENDS

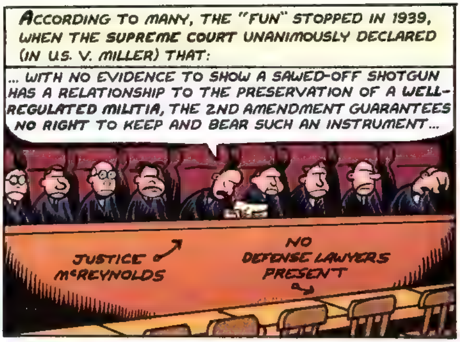
©2001 BY P. BAGGE (PETERBAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET)



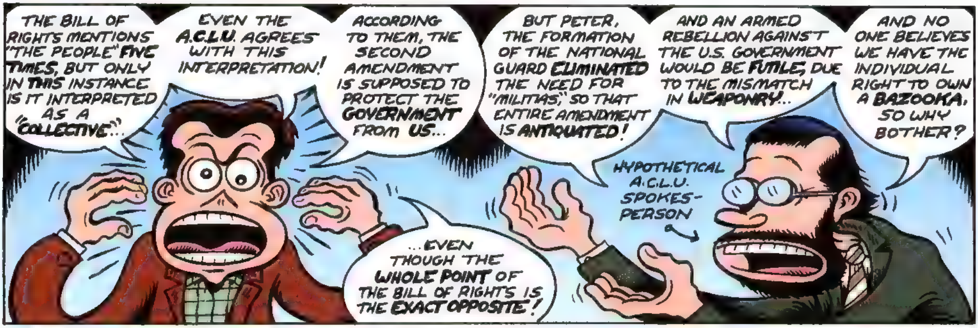
THE RIGHT TO OWN A BAZOOKA
AND OTHER INALIENABLE RIGHTS, by P. BAGGE '07
(PETERBAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET)
THE MASS MURDER AT VIRGINIA TECH HAS REKINDLED DEBATES OVER GUN LAWS, SUCH AS THE "GUN SHOW LOOPHOLE" THAT ALLOWS FIREARM PURCHASES WITHOUT BACKGROUND CHECKS...
SO I OBTAINED PERMISSION TO ATTEND A PRIVATE GUN SHOW HELD BY A LOCAL CLUB CALLED THE WASHINGTON ARMS COLLECTORS...
ALTHOUGH IT'S NOT REQUIRED BY LAW, THE W.A.C.'S SHOWS ARE CLOSED TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC TO AVOID POTENTIAL LEGAL TROUBLE, ACCORDING TO CLUB PRES. JOE WALDRON...
GLOCK
LESS THAN 2 PERCENT OF ALL GUN CRIMES INVOLVE FIREARMS PURCHASED AT GUN SHOWS AND FLEA MARKETS...
BUT THAT FACT WON'T STOP POLITICIANS FROM GOING AFTER US IF THEY EVER DO TRACE A PERP'S GUN BACK TO US...
EXIT
UH-HUH...
THIS 100-YEAR-OLD DERRINGER IS THE CUTEST LI'L KILLING DEVICE I'VE EVER SEEN!
I'LL BUY OR TRADE ANYTHING THAT DOESN'T RUN ON GAS!
"POW! POW!"
MACE
KNOWING NEXT TO NOTHING ABOUT GUNS, I ASKED JOE A LOT OF STUPID QUESTIONS...
ISN'T THAT SCARY-LOOKING THING IN VIOLATION OF THE ASSAULT WEAPON BAN?
THAT BAN'S EXPIRED, BUT EVEN THIS COULD'VE BEEN MADE "LEGAL" BY, SAY, REMOVING THE BAYONET MOUNT...
AUTHENTIC REPLICA AK-47
...WHICH WENT A LONG WAY TO CURB THE EPIDEMIC OF DRIVE-BY BAYONET ATTACKS, HEH-HEH!
A FORMER MARINE OFFICER, JOE ALSO LOBBIES THE STATE GOVERNMENT ON BEHALF OF THE N.R.A...
OUR STATE'S CONSTITUTION IS UNAMBIGUOUS REGARDING GUN OWNERSHIP...
"...THE RIGHT OF THE INDIVIDUAL TO BEAR ARMS IN SELF-DEFENSE SHALL NOT BE IMPAIRED."
RULES
REGISTER HERE
COFFEE
DONUTS
SPEAKING OF AMBIGUITY, I ASKED JOE WHAT THE 2ND AMENDMENT TO THE U.S. CONSTITUTION MEANS TO HIM...
IT MEANS WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO VIOLENTLY OVERTHROW THE GOVERNMENT IF NECESSARY...
AND THAT'D BE PRETTY HARD TO DO WITHOUT GUNS.

WHOA! THAT'S CRAZY TALK, JOE! THOUGH THOSE SAME EXACT SENTIMENTS WERE REPEATEDLY EXPRESSED BY OUR FOUNDING FATHERS, IN EQUALLY UNAMBIGUOUS TERMS...

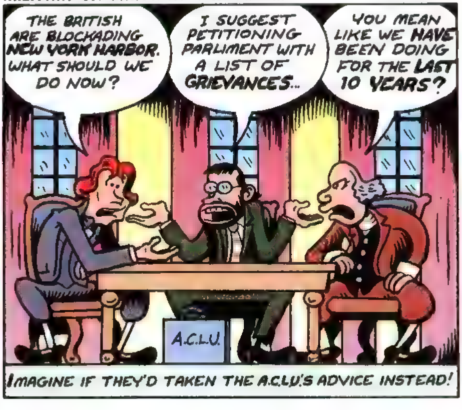


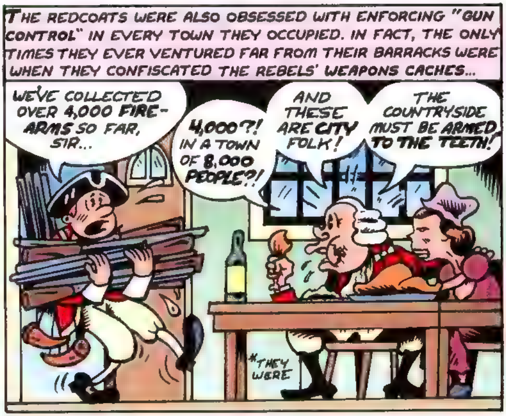


FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES, THIS RULING HAS REDEFINED THE RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS AS A COLLECTIVE RIGHT – EXERCISED ONLY BY MEMBERS OF GOVERNMENT-RUN "MILITIAS"!

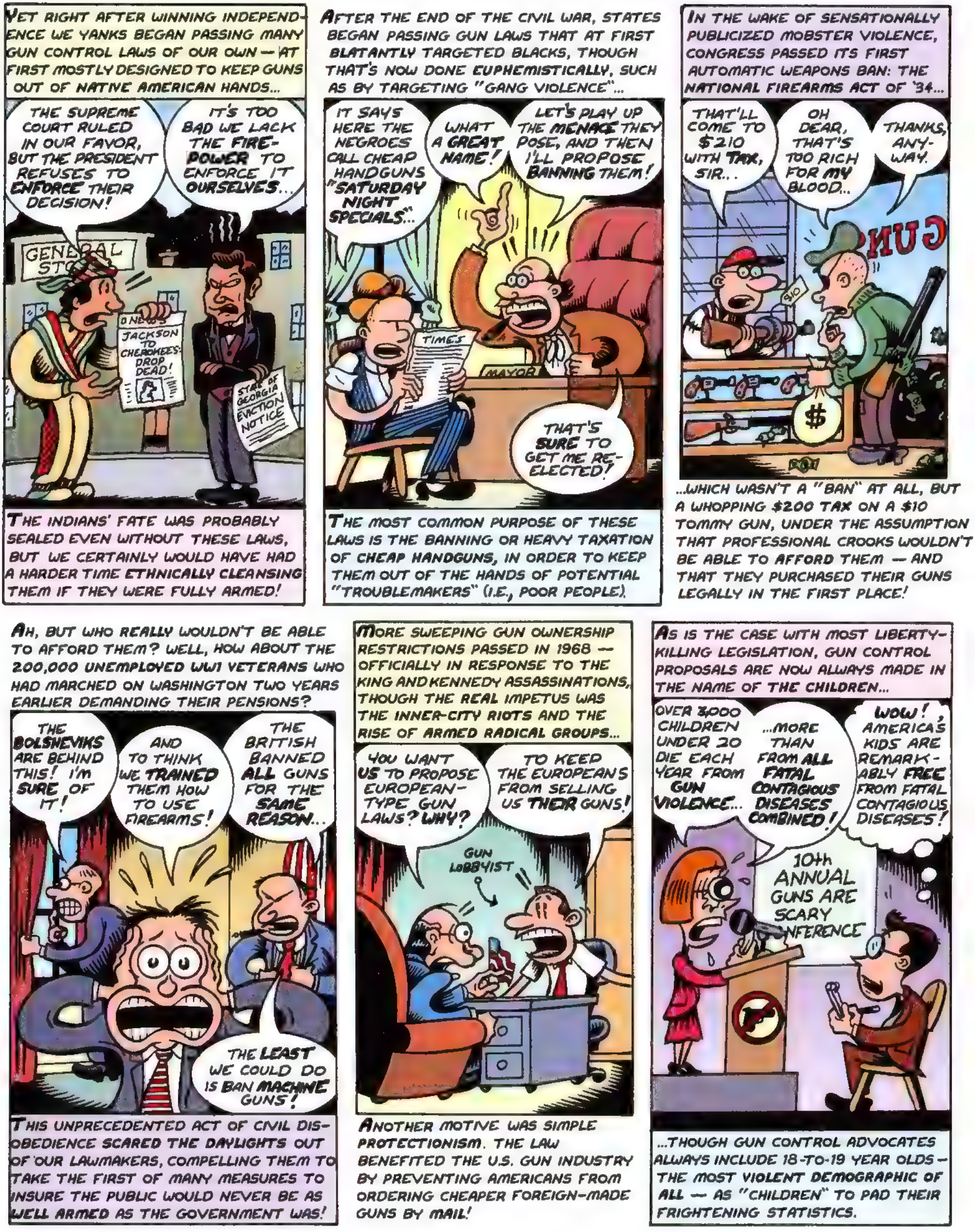


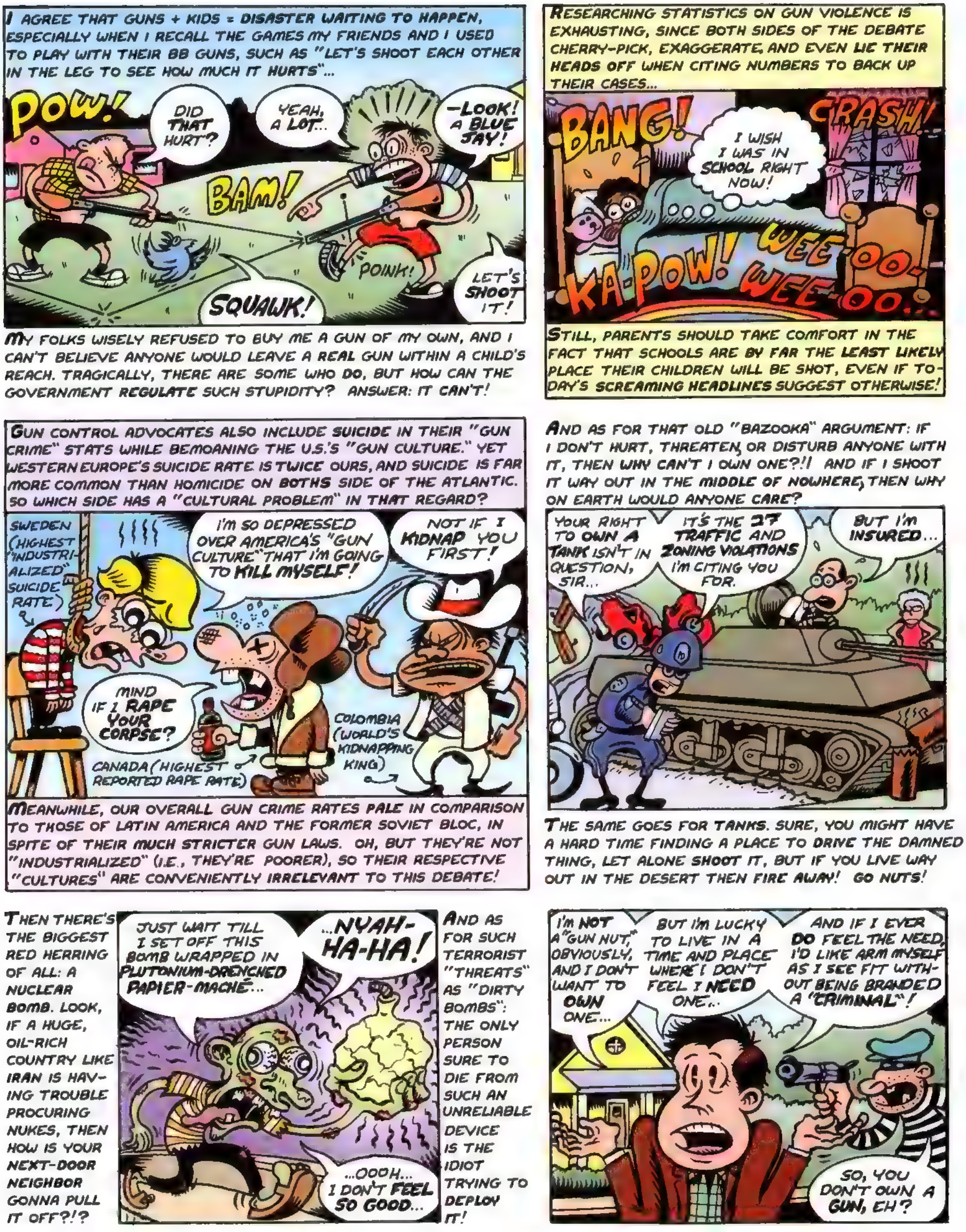
WHY BOTHER?!? WELL, I DOUBT MANY COLONIAL FARMERS HAD ENTIRE ARMADAS OF 64-GUN MAN-O'-WARS AT THEIR DISPOSAL, BUT THAT DIDN'T STOP THEM FROM TAKING ON — AND DEFEATING — THE MOST POWERFUL MILITARY ON EARTH AT THE TIME...





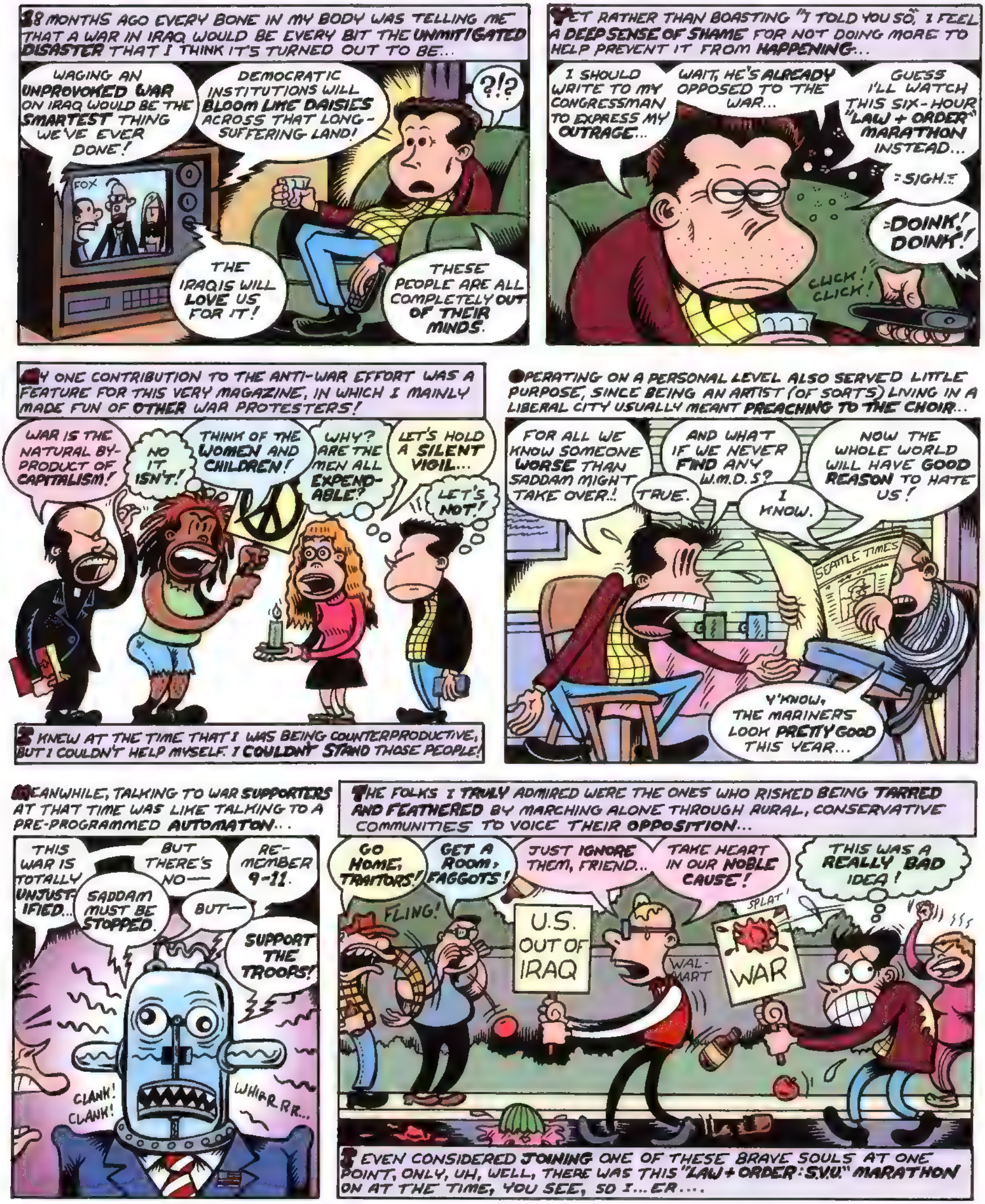
THE COLONISTS WERE ALSO "BANNED" FROM MANUFACTURING THEIR OWN WEAPONRY, THOUGH INLAND TOWNS LIKE SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS, THAT WERE SOMEWHAT OUT OF THE ENEMY'S REACH CONTINUED TO MAKE RIFLES ILLEGALLY.


YET RIGHT AFTER WINNING INDEPENDENCE WE YANKS BEGAN PASSING MANY GUN CONTROL LAWS OF OUR OWN — AT FIRST MOSTLY DESIGNED TO KEEP GUNS OUT OF NATIVE AMERICAN HANDS...
THE SUPREME COURT RULED IN OUR FAVOR, BUT THE PRESIDENT REFUSES TO ENFORCE THEIR DECISION!
IT'S TOO BAD WE LACK THE FIRE-[redacted] TO ENFORCE IT OURSELVES...
GENERAL STORE
NEWS
JACKSON TO CHEROKEES: DROP DEAD!
STATE OF GEORGIA EVICTION NOTICE
THE INDIANS' FATE WAS PROBABLY SEALED EVEN WITHOUT THESE LAWS, BUT WE CERTAINLY WOULD HAVE HAD A HARDER TIME ETHNICALLY CLEANSING THEM IF THEY WERE FULLY ARMED!
AFTER THE END OF THE CIVIL WAR, STATES BEGAN PASSING GUN LAWS THAT AT FIRST BLATANTLY TARGETED BLACKS, THOUGH THAT'S NOW DONE EUPHEMISTICALLY, SUCH AS BY TARGETING "GANG VIOLENCE"...
IT SAYS HERE THE NEGROES CALL CHEAP HANDGUNS "SATURDAY NIGHT SPECIALS"...
WHAT A GREAT NAME!
LET'S PLAY UP THE MENACE THEY POSE, AND THEN I'LL PROPOSE BANNING THEM!
TIMES
MAYOR
THAT'S SURE TO GET ME RE-ELECTED!
THE MOST COMMON PURPOSE OF THESE LAWS IS THE BANNING OR HEAVY TAXATION OF CHEAP HANDGUNS, IN ORDER TO KEEP THEM OUT OF THE HANDS OF POTENTIAL "TROUBLEMAKERS" (I.E., POOR PEOPLE).
IN THE WAKE OF SENSATIONALLY PUBLICIZED MOBSTER VIOLENCE, CONGRESS PASSED ITS FIRST AUTOMATIC WEAPONS BAN: THE NATIONAL FIREARMS ACT OF '34...
THAT'LL COME TO $210 WITH TAX, SIR...
OH DEAR, THAT'S TOO RICH FOR MY BLOOD...
THANKS, ANYWAY.
GUNS
$10
$
...WHICH WASN'T A "BAN" AT ALL, BUT A WHOPPING $200 TAX ON A $10 TOMMY GUN, UNDER THE ASSUMPTION THAT PROFESSIONAL CROOKS WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO AFFORD THEM — AND THAT THEY PURCHASED THEIR GUNS LEGALLY IN THE FIRST PLACE!
AH, BUT WHO REALLY WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO AFFORD THEM? WELL, HOW ABOUT THE 200,000 UNEMPLOYED WWI VETERANS WHO HAD MARCHED ON WASHINGTON TWO YEARS EARLIER DEMANDING THEIR PENSIONS?
THE BOLSHEVIKS ARE BEHIND THIS! I'M SURE OF IT!
AND TO THINK WE TRAINED THEM HOW TO USE FIREARMS!
THE BRITISH BANNED ALL GUNS FOR THE SAME REASON...
THE LEAST WE COULD DO IS BAN MACHINE GUNS!
THIS UNPRECEDENTED ACT OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE SCARED THE DAYLIGHTS OUT OF OUR LAWMAKERS, COMPELLING THEM TO TAKE THE FIRST OF MANY MEASURES TO INSURE THE PUBLIC WOULD NEVER BE AS WELL ARMED AS THE GOVERNMENT WAS!
MORE SWEEPING GUN OWNERSHIP RESTRICTIONS PASSED IN 1968 — OFFICIALLY IN RESPONSE TO THE KING AND KENNEDY ASSASSINATIONS, THOUGH THE REAL IMPETUS WAS THE INNER-CITY RIOTS AND THE RISE OF ARMED RADICAL GROUPS...
YOU WANT US TO PROPOSE EUROPEAN-TYPE GUN LAWS? WHY?
TO KEEP THE EUROPEANS FROM SELLING US THEIR GUNS!
GUN LOBBYIST
ANOTHER MOTIVE WAS SIMPLE PROTECTIONISM. THE LAW BENEFITED THE U.S. GUN INDUSTRY BY PREVENTING AMERICANS FROM ORDERING CHEAPER FOREIGN-MADE GUNS BY MAIL!
AS IS THE CASE WITH MOST LIBERTY-KILLING LEGISLATION, GUN CONTROL PROPOSALS ARE NOW ALWAYS MADE IN THE NAME OF THE CHILDREN...
OVER 3,000 CHILDREN UNDER 20 DIE EACH YEAR FROM GUN VIOLENCE...
...MORE THAN FROM ALL FATAL CONTAGIOUS DISEASES COMBINED!
WOW!, AMERICA'S KIDS ARE REMARKABLY FREE FROM FATAL CONTAGIOUS DISEASES!
10th ANNUAL GUNS ARE SCARY CONFERENCE
...THOUGH GUN CONTROL ADVOCATES ALWAYS INCLUDE 18-TO-19 YEAR OLDS — THE MOST VIOLENT DEMOGRAPHIC OF ALL — AS "CHILDREN" TO PAD THEIR FRIGHTENING STATISTICS.


I AGREE THAT GUNS + KIDS = DISASTER WAITING TO HAPPEN, ESPECIALLY WHEN I RECALL THE GAMES MY FRIENDS AND I USED TO PLAY WITH THEIR BB GUNS, SUCH AS "LET'S SHOOT EACH OTHER IN THE LEG TO SEE HOW MUCH IT HURTS"...
POW!
DID THAT HURT?
YEAH, A LOT...
—LOOK! A BLUE JAY!
BAM!
POINK!
SQUAWK!
LET'S SHOOT IT!
MY FOLKS WISELY REFUSED TO BUY ME A GUN OF MY OWN, AND I CAN'T BELIEVE ANYONE WOULD LEAVE A REAL GUN WITHIN A CHILD'S REACH. TRAGICALLY, THERE ARE SOME WHO DO, BUT HOW CAN THE GOVERNMENT REGULATE SUCH STUPIDITY? ANSWER: IT CAN'T!
RESEARCHING STATISTICS ON GUN VIOLENCE IS EXHAUSTING, SINCE BOTH SIDES OF THE DEBATE CHERRY-PICK, EXAGGERATE, AND EVEN LIE THEIR HEADS OFF WHEN CITING NUMBERS TO BACK UP THEIR CASES...
BANG!
CRASH!
I WISH I WAS IN SCHOOL RIGHT NOW!
KA-POW!
WEE-OO-WEE-OO...
STILL, PARENTS SHOULD TAKE COMFORT IN THE FACT THAT SCHOOLS ARE BY FAR THE LEAST LIKELY PLACE THEIR CHILDREN WILL BE SHOT, EVEN IF TODAY'S SCREAMING HEADLINES SUGGEST OTHERWISE!
GUN CONTROL ADVOCATES ALSO INCLUDE SUICIDE IN THEIR "GUN CRIME" STATS WHILE BEMOANING THE U.S.'S "GUN CULTURE." YET WESTERN EUROPE'S SUICIDE RATE IS TWICE OURS, AND SUICIDE IS FAR MORE COMMON THAN HOMICIDE ON BOTHS SIDE OF THE ATLANTIC. SO WHICH SIDE HAS A "CULTURAL PROBLEM" IN THAT REGARD?
SWEDEN (HIGHEST "INDUSTRIALIZED" SUICIDE RATE)
I'M SO DEPRESSED OVER AMERICA'S "GUN CULTURE" THAT I'M GOING TO KILL MYSELF!
NOT IF I KIDNAP YOU FIRST!
MIND IF I RAPE YOUR CORPSE?
CANADA (HIGHEST REPORTED RAPE RATE)
COLOMBIA (WORLD'S KIDNAPPING KING)
MEANWHILE, OUR OVERALL GUN CRIME RATES PALE IN COMPARISON TO THOSE OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE FORMER SOVIET BLOC, IN SPITE OF THEIR MUCH STRICTER GUN LAWS. OH, BUT THEY'RE NOT "INDUSTRIALIZED" (I.E., THEY'RE POORER), SO THEIR RESPECTIVE "CULTURES" ARE CONVENIENTLY IRRELEVANT TO THIS DEBATE!
AND AS FOR THAT OLD "BAZOOKA" ARGUMENT: IF I DON'T HURT, THREATEN, OR DISTURB ANYONE WITH IT, THEN WHY CAN'T I OWN ONE?!! AND IF I SHOOT IT WAY OUT IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE, THEN WHY ON EARTH WOULD ANYONE CARE?
YOUR RIGHT TO OWN A TANK ISN'T IN QUESTION, SIR...
IT'S THE 27 TRAFFIC AND ZONING VIOLATIONS I'M CITING YOU FOR.
BUT I'M INSURED...
THE SAME GOES FOR TANKS. SURE, YOU MIGHT HAVE A HARD TIME FINDING A PLACE TO DRIVE THE DAMNED THING, LET ALONE SHOOT IT, BUT IF YOU LIVE WAY OUT IN THE DESERT THEN FIRE AWAY! GO NUTS!
THEN THERE'S THE BIGGEST RED HERRING OF ALL: A NUCLEAR BOMB. LOOK, IF A HUGE, OIL-RICH COUNTRY LIKE IRAN IS HAVING TROUBLE PROCURING NUKES, THEN HOW IS YOUR NEXT-DOOR NEIGHBOR GONNA PULL IT OFF?!?
JUST WAIT TILL I SET OFF THIS BOMB WRAPPED IN PLUTONIUM-DRENCHED PAPIER-MACHÉ...
...NYAH-HA-HA!
...OOOH... I DON'T FEEL SO GOOD...
AND AS FOR SUCH TERRORIST "THREATS" AS "DIRTY BOMBS": THE ONLY PERSON SURE TO DIE FROM SUCH AN UNRELIABLE DEVICE IS THE IDIOT TRYING TO DEPLOY IT!
I'M NOT A "GUN NUT," OBVIOUSLY, AND I DON'T WANT TO OWN ONE...
BUT I'M LUCKY TO LIVE IN A TIME AND PLACE WHERE I DON'T FEEL I NEED ONE...
AND IF I EVER DO FEEL THE NEED, I'D LIKE ARM MYSELF AS I SEE FIT WITHOUT BEING BRANDED A "CRIMINAL"!
SO, YOU DON'T OWN A GUN, EH?

CONFESSIONS OF A LAZY ANTI-WARRIOR

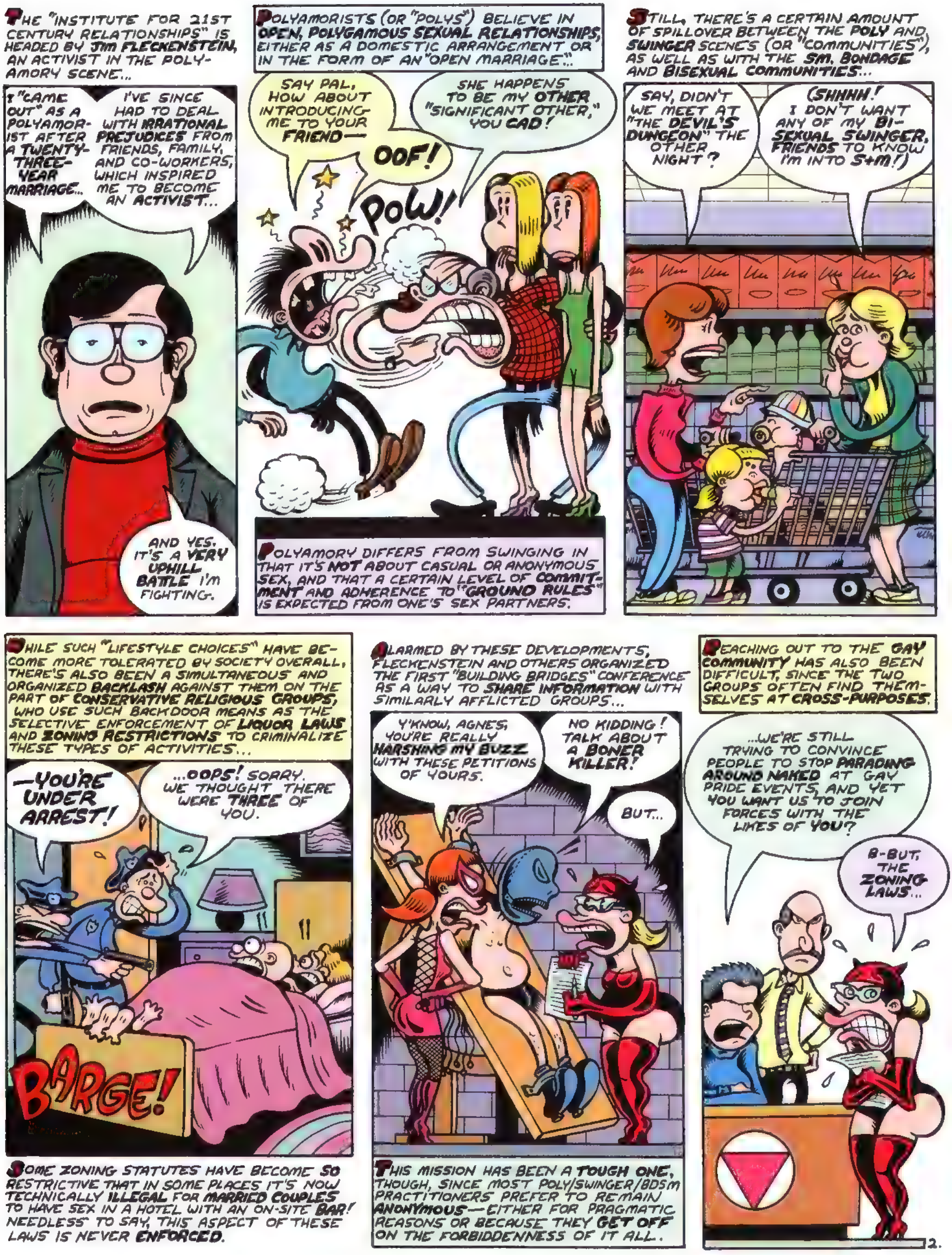
PETERBAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET

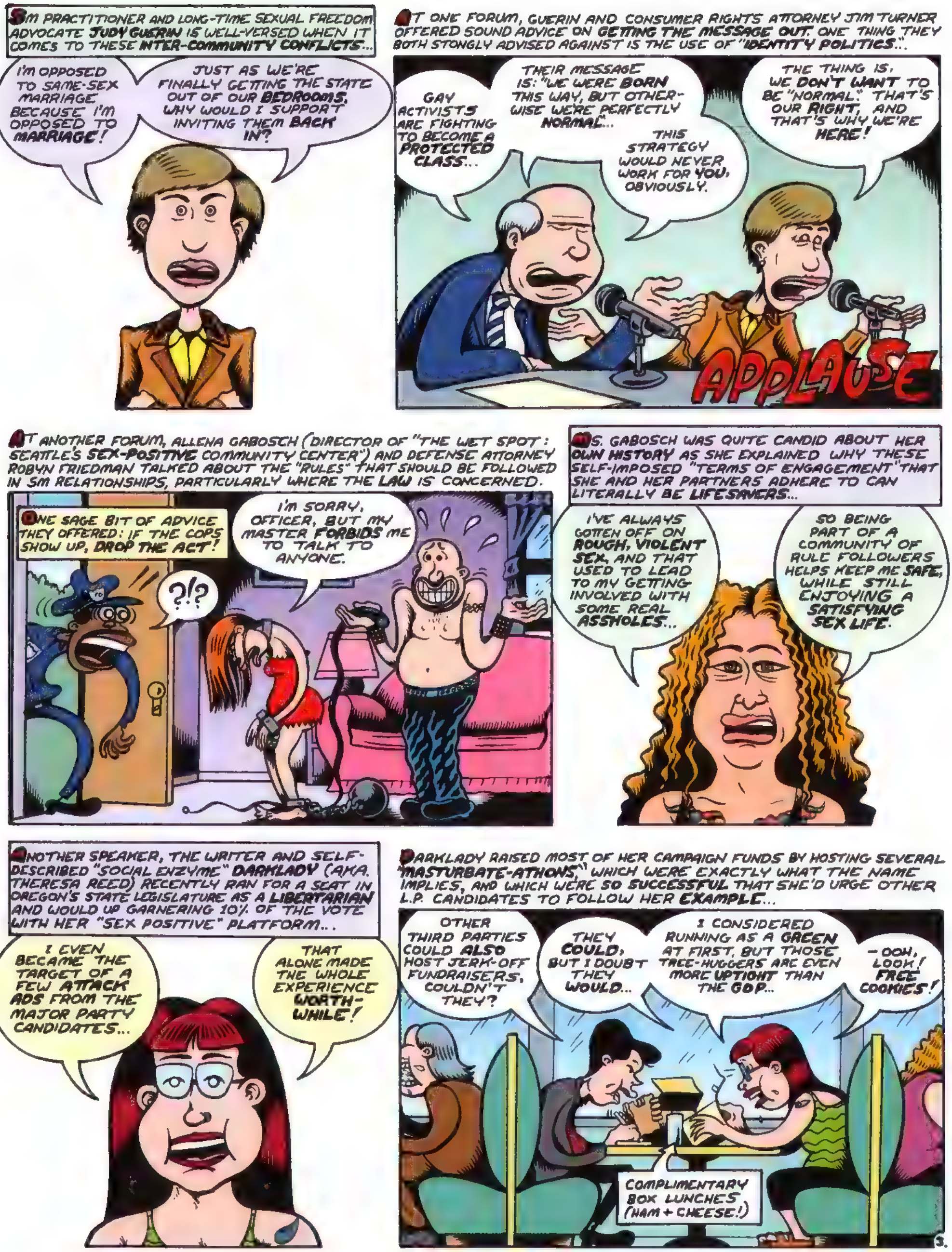


STUPID
SEX

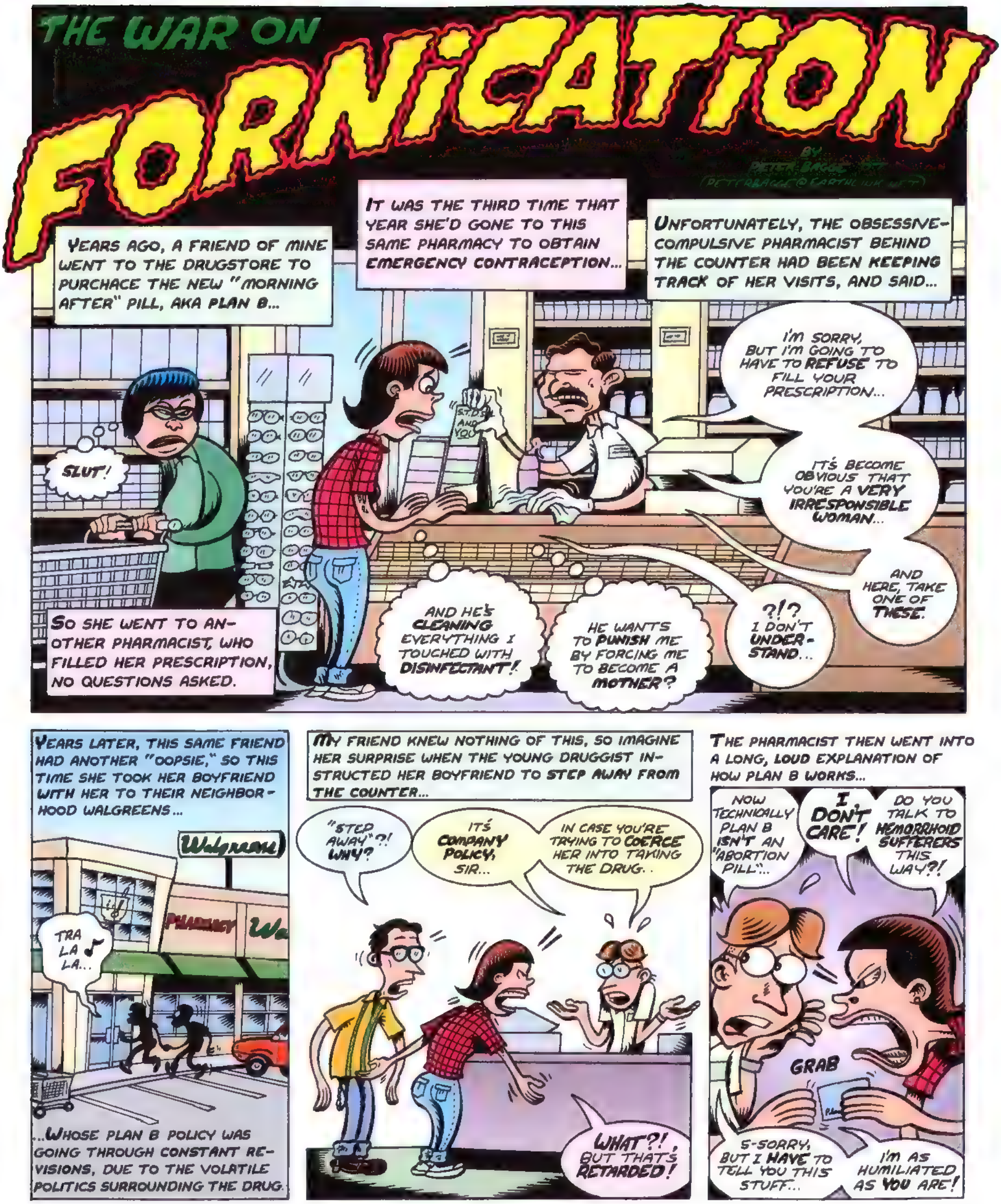
P. BAGGE '05

SWINGERS OF THE WORLD, UNITE!
A REPORT FROM AN "ALTERNATIVE LIFE-STYLES" CONFERENCE
BY PETER BAGGE c.2004 (PETERBAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET)
THE RECENT DEBATE OVER GAY MARRIAGE INSPIRED ME (IN PART) TO ATTEND THE THIRD ANNUAL "BUILDING BRIDGES" CONFERENCE, HELD IN A HOTEL IN SUBURBAN SEATTLE...
I HAD NO IDEA WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THIS GATHERING OF SWINGERS, POLYAMORISTS, SADO-MASOCHISTS, TRANSSEXUALS, AND OTHER NONTRADITIONAL TYPES OF FOLKS...
AND MY INITIAL GREETING HAD ALL OF MY UPTIGHT, TRADITIONALIST ALARM BELLS RINGING...
TAMARACK ROOM
HERE, TAKE MY SEAT NEXT TO MY FRIEND...
IN FACT, TAKE MY FRIEND! HA-HA!
ERR... TH-THANKS, I GUESS... HEH-HEH!
?!
SHOULD I FLEE NOW? OR WOULD THAT BE TOO CONSPICUOUS?
=GIGGLE!=
WELCOME TO THE
PRESS
TOYS IN BABELAND CATALOG
MY AWKWARD REACTION —COUPLED WITH MY OVERSIZED PRESS BADGE— IMMEDIATELY SINGLED ME OUT AS AN OUTSIDER, AND FROM THAT POINT ON THE OTHER ATTENDEES WERE POLITE YET WARY TOWARDS ME...
WILL YOU BE ATTENDING OUR "SPANKS-GIVING" BALL?
(CAREFUL! HE'S WITH THE PRESS!)
("REASON" MAGAZINE" —WHAT'S THAT?
LIBERTARIAN, I THINK...
IS THAT GOOD?
DOES THAT MEAN I'M NOT INVITED?
SPANKSGIVING BALL
PRESS
HAVING MY NONPARTICIPATORY STATUS CONFIRMED MADE ME MORE AT EASE, THOUGH I STILL HAD MY SQUARENESS PUT TO THE TEST BY SUCH CASUAL UTTERANCES AS THESE:
HOW CAN I GET MEDICAL COVERAGE FOR MY SECOND HUSBAND?
IF I ADOPT MY LIVE-IN LOVERS WOULD I BE VIOLATING INCEST LAWS?
?!?
THE LAW AND YOU
PLOP!
1.

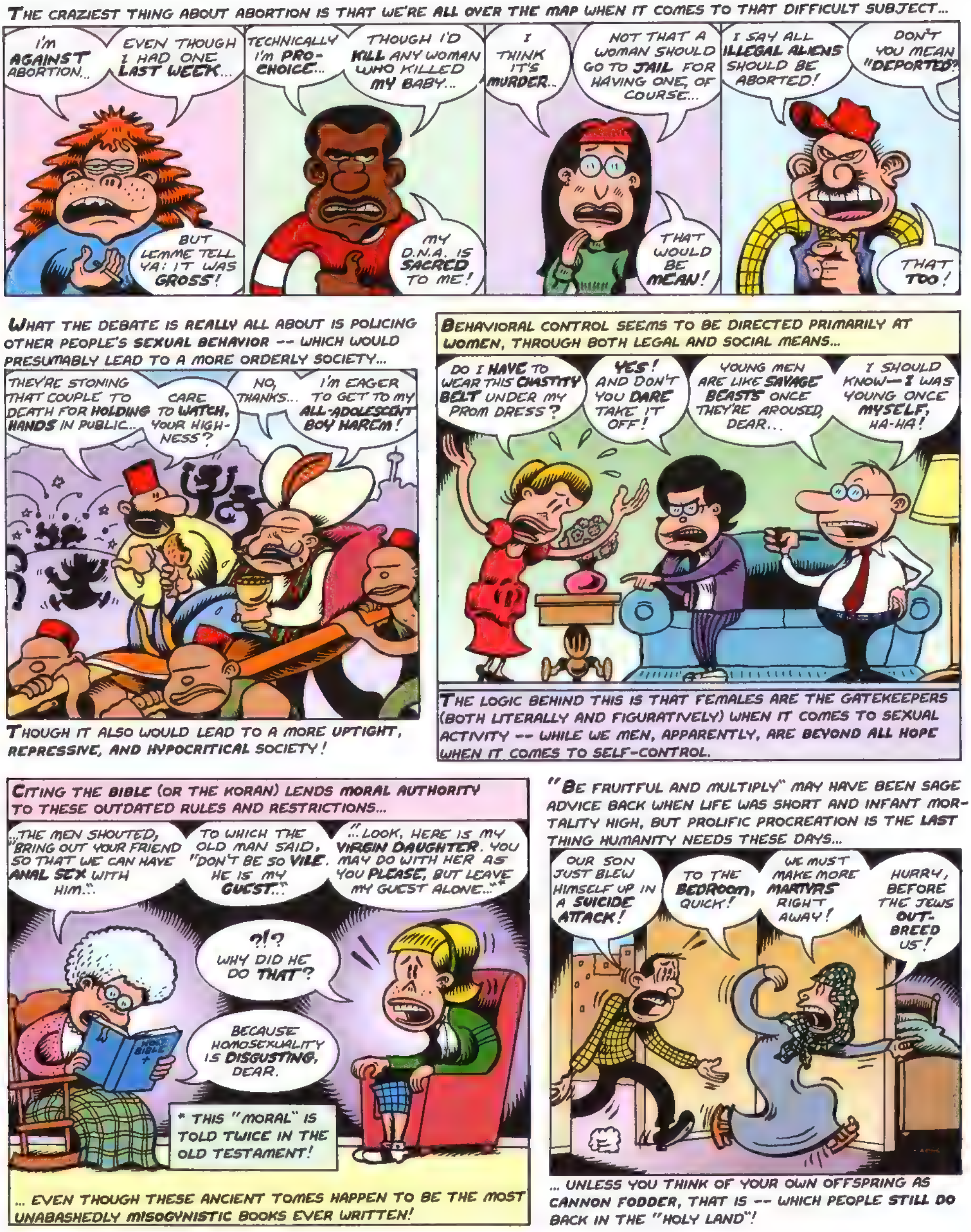

THE "INSTITUTE FOR 21ST CENTURY RELATIONSHIPS" IS HEADED BY JIM FLECKENSTEIN, AN ACTIVIST IN THE POLYAMORY SCENE...
I "CAME OUT" AS A POLYAMORIST AFTER A TWENTY-THREE-YEAR MARRIAGE...
I'VE SINCE HAD TO DEAL WITH IRRATIONAL PREJUDICES FROM FRIENDS, FAMILY, AND CO-WORKERS, WHICH INSPIRED ME TO BECOME AN ACTIVIST...
AND YES, IT'S A VERY UPHILL BATTLE I'M FIGHTING.
POLYAMORISTS (OR "POLYS") BELIEVE IN OPEN, POLYGAMOUS SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS, EITHER AS A DOMESTIC ARRANGEMENT OR IN THE FORM OF AN "OPEN MARRIAGE"...
SAY PAL, HOW ABOUT INTRODUCING ME TO YOUR FRIEND—
SHE HAPPENS TO BE MY OTHER "SIGNIFICANT OTHER," YOU CAD!
OOF!
POW!
POLYAMORY DIFFERS FROM SWINGING IN THAT IT'S NOT ABOUT CASUAL OR ANONYMOUS SEX, AND THAT A CERTAIN LEVEL OF COMMITMENT AND ADHERENCE TO "GROUND RULES" IS EXPECTED FROM ONE'S SEX PARTNERS.
STILL, THERE'S A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF SPILLOVER BETWEEN THE POLY AND SWINGER SCENES (OR "COMMUNITIES"), AS WELL AS WITH THE SM, BONDAGE AND BISEXUAL COMMUNITIES...
SAY, DIDN'T WE MEET AT "THE DEVIL'S DUNGEON" THE OTHER NIGHT?
(SHHHH! I DON'T WANT ANY OF MY BI-SEXUAL SWINGER FRIENDS TO KNOW I'M INTO S+M!)
WHILE SUCH "LIFESTYLE CHOICES" HAVE BECOME MORE TOLERATED BY SOCIETY OVERALL, THERE'S ALSO BEEN A SIMULTANEOUS AND ORGANIZED BACKLASH AGAINST THEM ON THE PART OF CONSERVATIVE RELIGIOUS GROUPS, WHO USE SUCH BACKDOOR MEANS AS THE SELECTIVE ENFORCEMENT OF LIQUOR LAWS AND ZONING RESTRICTIONS TO CRIMINALIZE THESE TYPES OF ACTIVITIES...
—YOU'RE UNDER ARREST!
...OOPS! SORRY. WE THOUGHT THERE WERE THREE OF YOU.
BARGE!
SOME ZONING STATUTES HAVE BECOME SO RESTRICTIVE THAT IN SOME PLACES IT'S NOW TECHNICALLY ILLEGAL FOR MARRIED COUPLES TO HAVE SEX IN A HOTEL WITH AN ON-SITE BAR! NEEDLESS TO SAY, THIS ASPECT OF THESE LAWS IS NEVER ENFORCED.
ALARMED BY THESE DEVELOPMENTS, FLECKENSTEIN AND OTHERS ORGANIZED THE FIRST "BUILDING BRIDGES" CONFERENCE AS A WAY TO SHARE INFORMATION WITH SIMILARLY AFFLICTED GROUPS...
Y'KNOW, AGNES, YOU'RE REALLY HARSHING MY BUZZ WITH THESE PETITIONS OF YOURS.
NO KIDDING! TALK ABOUT A BONER KILLER!
BUT...
THIS MISSION HAS BEEN A TOUGH ONE, THOUGH, SINCE MOST POLY/SWINGER/BDSM PRACTITIONERS PREFER TO REMAIN ANONYMOUS—EITHER FOR PRAGMATIC REASONS OR BECAUSE THEY GET OFF ON THE FORBIDDENNESS OF IT ALL.
REACHING OUT TO THE GAY COMMUNITY HAS ALSO BEEN DIFFICULT, SINCE THE TWO GROUPS OFTEN FIND THEMSELVES AT CROSS-PURPOSES.
...WE'RE STILL TRYING TO CONVINCE PEOPLE TO STOP PARADING AROUND NAKED AT GAY PRIDE EVENTS, AND YET YOU WANT US TO JOIN FORCES WITH THE LIKES OF YOU?
B-BUT, THE ZONING LAWS...
2.

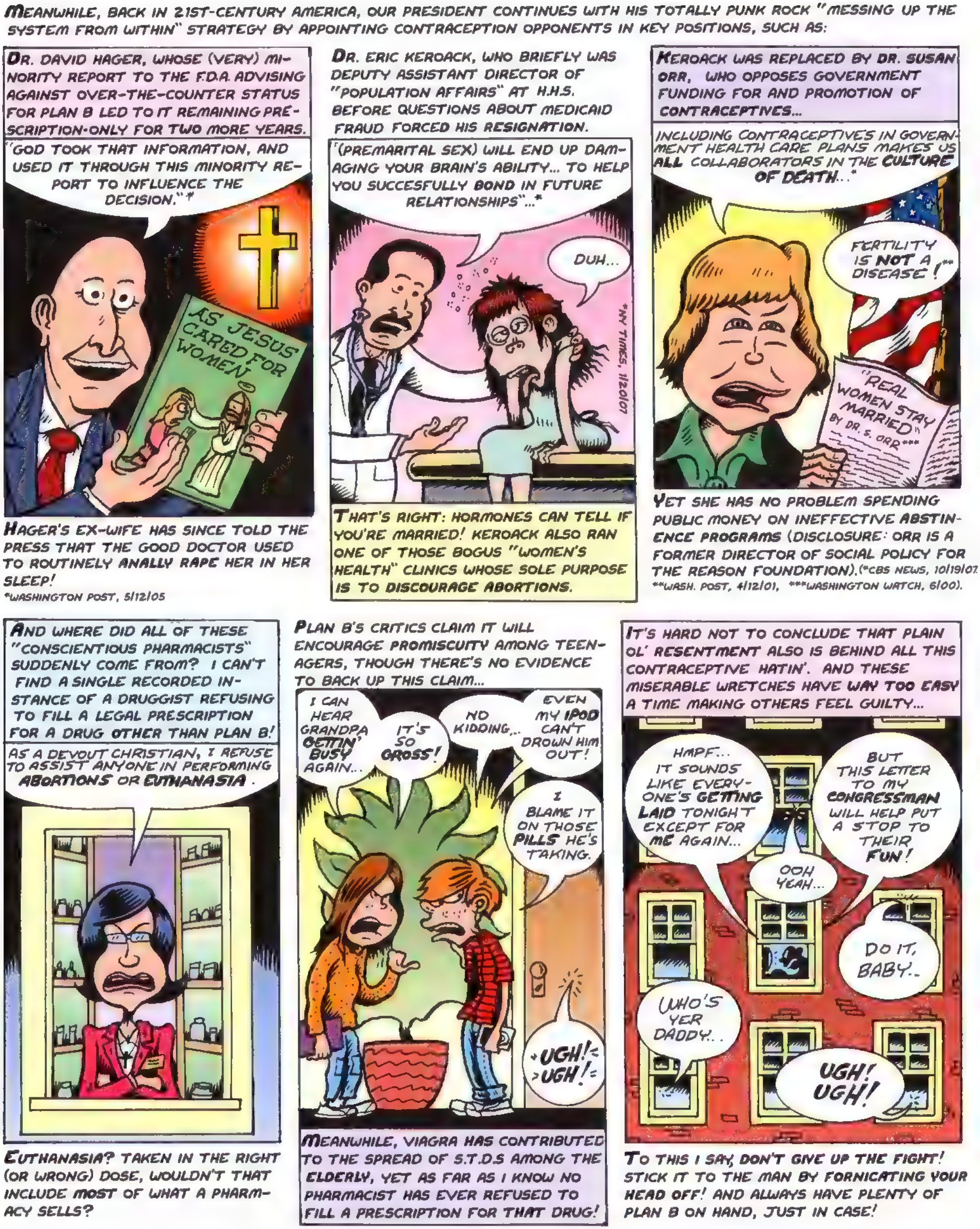

SM PRACTITIONER AND LONG-TIME SEXUAL FREEDOM ADVOCATE JUDY GUERIN IS WELL-VERSED WHEN IT COMES TO THESE INTER-COMMUNITY CONFLICTS...
I'M OPPOSED TO SAME-SEX MARRIAGE BECAUSE I'M OPPOSED TO MARRIAGE!
JUST AS WE'RE FINALLY GETTING THE STATE OUT OF OUR BEDROOMS, WHY WOULD I SUPPORT INVITING THEM BACK IN?
AT ONE FORUM, GUERIN AND CONSUMER RIGHTS ATTORNEY JIM TURNER OFFERED SOUND ADVICE ON GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT. ONE THING THEY BOTH STONGLY ADVISED AGAINST IS THE USE OF "IDENTITY POLITICS"...
GAY ACTIVISTS ARE FIGHTING TO BECOME A PROTECTED CLASS...
THEIR MESSAGE IS: "WE WERE BORN THIS WAY, BUT OTHERWISE WERE PERFECTLY NORMAL"...
THIS STRATEGY WOULD NEVER WORK FOR YOU, OBVIOUSLY.
THE THING IS, WE DON'T WANT TO BE "NORMAL." THAT'S OUR RIGHT, AND THAT'S WHY WE'RE HERE!
APPLAUSE
AT ANOTHER FORUM, ALLENA GABOSCH (DIRECTOR OF "THE WET SPOT: SEATTLE'S SEX-POSITIVE COMMUNITY CENTER") AND DEFENSE ATTORNEY ROBYN FRIEDMAN TALKED ABOUT THE "RULES" THAT SHOULD BE FOLLOWED IN SM RELATIONSHIPS, PARTICULARLY WHERE THE LAW IS CONCERNED.
ONE SAGE BIT OF ADVICE THEY OFFERED: IF THE COPS SHOW UP, DROP THE ACT!
?!?
I'M SORRY, OFFICER, BUT MY MASTER FORBIDS ME TO TALK TO ANYONE.
MS. GABOSCH WAS QUITE CANDID ABOUT HER OWN HISTORY AS SHE EXPLAINED WHY THESE SELF-IMPOSED "TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT" THAT SHE AND HER PARTNERS ADHERE TO CAN LITERALLY BE LIFESAVERS...
I'VE ALWAYS GOTTEN OFF ON ROUGH, VIOLENT SEX, AND THAT USED TO LEAD TO MY GETTING INVOLVED WITH SOME REAL ASSHOLES...
SO BEING PART OF A COMMUNITY OF RULE FOLLOWERS HELPS KEEP ME SAFE, WHILE STILL ENJOYING A SATISFYING SEX LIFE.
ANOTHER SPEAKER, THE WRITER AND SELF-DESCRIBED "SOCIAL ENZYME" DARKLADY (AKA. THERESA REED) RECENTLY RAN FOR A SEAT IN OREGON'S STATE LEGISLATURE AS A LIBERTARIAN AND WOULD UP GARNERING 10% OF THE VOTE WITH HER "SEX POSITIVE" PLATFORM...
I EVEN BECAME THE TARGET OF A FEW ATTACK ADS FROM THE MAJOR PARTY CANDIDATES...
THAT ALONE MADE THE WHOLE EXPERIENCE WORTH-WHILE!
DARKLADY RAISED MOST OF HER CAMPAIGN FUNDS BY HOSTING SEVERAL "MASTURBATE-ATHONS," WHICH WERE EXACTLY WHAT THE NAME IMPLIES, AND WHICH WERE SO SUCCESSFUL THAT SHE'D URGE OTHER L.P. CANDIDATES TO FOLLOW HER EXAMPLE...
OTHER THIRD PARTIES COULD ALSO HOST JERK-OFF FUNDRAISERS, COULDN'T THEY?
THEY COULD, BUT I DOUBT THEY WOULD...
I CONSIDERED RUNNING AS A GREEN AT FIRST, BUT THOSE TREE-HUGGERS ARE EVEN MORE UPTIGHT THAN THE GOP...
-OOH, LOOK! FREE COOKIES!
COMPLIMENTARY BOX LUNCHES (HAM + CHEESE!)
3.

THERE WERE SEVERAL SPEAKERS AT THIS CONFERENCE WHO REALLY PUT ME OFF, HOWEVER, SUCH AS THE PROPONENTS OF THESE NEW "HOT TUB" RELIGIONS, WHO LIKE TO ATTACH SOME MUDDLED SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE TO THEIR ORGIES...
...AT WHICH POINT WE USUALLY BREAK UP INTO GROUPS OF FOUR...
—AND I MUST STRESS THAT NUDITY IS OPTIONAL...
OPTIONAL YET MUCH PREFERRED. HEH-HEH!
:CHUCKLE!:
SACRED SEXUALITY
NOT THAT THESE FOLKS AREN'T FAR PREFERABLE TO ANY GROUP OF SEX-HATING BIBLE-THUMPERS, BUT THESE "SENSUAL SANTAS" STILL GAVE ME THE CREEPS!
I ALSO WAS SURPRISED BY THE SIZE OF THE PRESS CORPS AT THIS EVENT, WHICH CONSISTED SOLELY OF MYSELF AND A CAMERA CREW FROM THE DISCOVERY CHANNEL (?!). DESPERATE FOR VISUALS, THE LATTER CONVINCED A THREESOME OF HALFWAY-DECENT-LOOKING SWINGERS TO PUT ON A DISPLAY WHILE I TRIED TO "UNWIND" AT THE HOTEL BAR...
C'MON, FOLKS! LET'S SEE SOME O' THAT SEXUAL FREEDOM IN ACTION!
WHEE!
:SNORT!:
:GIGGLE!:
DISCOVERY CHANNEL
WHAT ABOUT MY FREEDOM TO GET DRUNK IN PEACE?!
PLUS I OFTEN OVERHEARD POLYS MAKE REFERENCE TO THEIR "PRIMARY" MATES, AS OPPOSED TO THEIR "SECONDARY"—OR EVEN "TERTIARY"—MATES. SO MUCH FOR THE CONCEPT OF HAVING MULTIPLE "SIGNIFICANT OTHERS"...
I HOPE MY SECONDARY REMEMBERED TO FEED THE FISH.
HER "TERTIARY."
CAN YOU IMAGINE BEING SOMEONE'S THIRD-STRING BEDROOM BENCHWARMER? HOW HUMILIATING!
AND THEN THERE'S THE AGE-OLD PROBLEM OF REVERSE DISCRIMINATION...
I WAS PART OF THE POLY COMMUNITY FOR YEARS...
BUT NOW THAT I'M IN A MONOGAMOUS RELATIONSHIP I NO LONGER HAVE ANY FRIENDS.
TRAITOR.
SELL-OUT!
YET JUST WHEN THESE PANEL DISCUSSIONS ON "HOW TO DEAL WITH JEALOUSY" AND "WHAT DO WE TELL THE CHILDREN?" HAD ME WONDERING WHY ANYONE WOULD WANT TO EVEN BOTHER WITH THESE CONVOLUTED "LIFESTYLES," I'D SUDDENLY REMEMBER THAT TRADITIONAL "STRAIGHT" COUPLES HARDLY HAVE A MONOPOLY ON HAPPINESS AND FUNCTIONALITY EITHER...
WHAT TH..? A "SWINGERS CONVENTION"? WHY, THAT'S DISGUSTING!
I BET YOU WISH YOU COULD JOIN THEM, YOU PIG...
AND YOU KIDS GET IN THE CAR NOW, BEFORE I BEAT THE SNOT OUT OF YOU!
YEAH! I'M SICK OF GOD!
AND I WANNA WEAR MAKE UP!
I'M HERE AT "SWING CON '04" IN VEGAS...
WHY DO WE HAVE TO GO TO CHURCH AND DAD DOESN'T?
LORD OF THE RINGS
I HATE THIS FAMILY!
I HATE YOU!
JUST LOOK AT HOW MANY MARRIAGE COUNSELORS AND DIVORCE LAWYERS THERE ARE IN THIS COUNTRY! LET'S FACE IT: WE'RE ALL A MESS!
SPEAKING OF WHICH, ONE LAWYER WHO HELD A Q+A ON "THE LEGAL ALTERNATIVES TO MARRIAGE" MADE A PARTICULARLY PROFOUND POINT...
THE SO-CALLED "MORAL MAJORITY" NOW REPRESENTS A MINORITY, IN THAT TRADITIONAL NUCLEAR FAMILIES ACCOUNT FOR ONLY ONE-FOURTH OF ALL U.S. HOUSEHOLDS...
SO TO CALL OUR LIFESTYLES "ALTERNATIVE" IS A MISNOMER, AND WE NEED TO MAKE OUR LAWMAKERS AWARE OF THAT FACT!
END!


THE WAR ON FORNICATION
BY PETER BAGGE
YEARS AGO, A FRIEND OF MINE WENT TO THE DRUGSTORE TO PURCHACE THE NEW "MORNING AFTER" PILL, AKA PLAN B...
IT WAS THE THIRD TIME THAT YEAR SHE'D GONE TO THIS SAME PHARMACY TO OBTAIN EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION...
UNFORTUNATELY, THE OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE PHARMACIST BEHIND THE COUNTER HAD BEEN KEEPING TRACK OF HER VISITS, AND SAID...
I'M SORRY, BUT I'M GOING TO HAVE TO REFUSE TO FILL YOUR PRESCRIPTION...
IT'S BECOME OBVIOUS THAT YOU'RE A VERY IRRESPONSIBLE WOMAN...
AND HERE, TAKE ONE OF THESE.
S.T.D.S AND YOU
SLUT!
AND HE'S CLEANING EVERYTHING I TOUCHED WITH DISINFECTANT!
HE WANTS TO PUNISH ME BY FORCING ME TO BECOME A MOTHER?
?!? I DON'T UNDER-STAND...
SO SHE WENT TO ANOTHER PHARMACIST, WHO FILLED HER PRESCRIPTION, NO QUESTIONS ASKED.
YEARS LATER, THIS SAME FRIEND HAD ANOTHER "OOPSIE," SO THIS TIME SHE TOOK HER BOYFRIEND WITH HER TO THEIR NEIGHBOR-HOOD WALGREENS...
Walgreens
PHARMACY
TRA LA LA...
...WHOSE PLAN B POLICY WAS GOING THROUGH CONSTANT RE-VISIONS, DUE TO THE VOLATILE POLITICS SURROUNDING THE DRUG.
MY FRIEND KNEW NOTHING OF THIS, SO IMAGINE HER SURPRISE WHEN THE YOUNG DRUGGIST IN-STRUCTED HER BOYFRIEND TO STEP AWAY FROM THE COUNTER...
"STEP AWAY"?! WHY?
IT'S COMPANY POLICY, SIR...
IN CASE YOU'RE TRYING TO COERCE HER INTO TAKING THE DRUG..
WHAT?! BUT THAT'S RETARDED!
THE PHARMACIST THEN WENT INTO A LONG, LOUD EXPLANATION OF HOW PLAN B WORKS...
NOW TECHNICALLY PLAN B ISN'T AN "ABORTION PILL"...
I DON'T CARE!
DO YOU TALK TO HEMORRHOID SUFFERERS THIS WAY?!
GRAB
S-SORRY, BUT I HAVE TO TELL YOU THIS STUFF...
I'M AS HUMILIATED AS YOU ARE!

IF PUBLIC HUMILIATION IS THE GOAL, WHY NOT GO ALL OUT AND GIVE FEMALE CUSTOMERS THE FULL TALIBAN TREATMENT?
HOW DARE YOU APPEAR IN PUBLIC WITH A MAN WHO ISN'T YOUR HUSBAND!
AND PUT THIS BURKA ON NOW!
IT'S COMPANY POLICY!
YOW!
SWAT!
SMACK! WHACK!
OH, WAIT -- WE WAGE WARS AGAINST SOCIETIES THAT HARBOR SUCH PRIMITIVE VIEWS ON SEXUALITY. I FORGOT!
PLAN B HAS REVIVED A WAR AGAINST CONTRACEPTIVES IN GENERAL -- DUE IN PART TO FALSE COMPARISONS WITH RU-486, WHICH IS AN "ABORTION PILL"!
AS GOD'S OFFICIAL SPOKESMAN, I SAY DON'T USE THE "ABORTION PILL"...
...OR ANYTHING LIKE IT! GOD HATES ALL THAT CRAP!
AND DON'T FORGET TO PAY YOUR TAXES...
AMEN.
RATHER THAN RACING FOR A WAITING EGG, SPERM ARE MORE LIKELY THE ONES WHO HAVE TO WAIT -- SOMETIMES UP TO FIVE DAYS -- BEFORE AN EGG IS RELEASED FROM THE OVARIES...
WHERE IS THAT @#%$!! EGG?
...BITCHES ALWAYS KEEPING US WAITING...
MUMBLE GRIPE...
...TAP TAP TAP...
PLAN B IS BASICALLY A "HOT SHOT" OF THE SAME HORMONES USED IN BIRTH CONTROL PILLS, WHICH PREVENTS THE EGG FROM BEING RELEASED, THUS PREVENTING FERTILIZATION.
IF FERTILIZATION DOES OCCUR, HOWEVER, PLAN B IS LIKELY TO PREVENT THE ZYGOTE FROM IMPLANTING ITSELF ON THE UTERINE WALL, WHERE IT WOULD THEN EVOLVE INTO AN EMBRYO, AND THEN A FETUS...
FULL HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ALL NONVIABLE SINGLE-CELLED ORGANISMS
HEY, I'M VULNERABLE!
...AND NOT EVERYONE AGREES AS TO WHETHER A FERTILIZED EGG COUNTS AS THE BEGINNING OF A LIFE, SINCE IT ISN'T VIABLE UNTIL IMPLANTATION. BUT IF A ZYGOTE IS A "BABY," DOES PREVENTING IMPLANTATION COUNT AS AN ABORTION?
I'M PERSONALLY NOT GOING TO LOSE ANY SLEEP OVER THIS HYPOTHETICAL TECHNICALITY, BUT THERE ARE SOME FOLKS WHO DO...
THEN...
EIGHTY PERCENT OF ALL ZYGOTES FAIL TO IMPLANT, AND ARE DISCHARGED NATURALLY...
ZZZZZ
NOW...
...PLAN B MAY PREVENT IMPLANTATION...
--WHAT?! WHY, THAT'S COLD-BLOODED MURDER!
...ALL OF WHOM ARE ANTI-ABORTION ACTIVISTS, WHOSE RECENT BESTOWAL OF FULL-BLOWN PERSONHOOD UPON ZYGOTES IS THEIR REASON TO OPPOSE EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTIVES ALTOGETHER.
THIS ISSUE HAS ALSO RE-EXPOSED THE FACT THAT MANY "PRO-LIFE" ACTIVISTS ARE OPPOSED TO THE USE OF CONTRACEPTIVES IN GENERAL...
THAT'S BECAUSE SEX IS SOLELY FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROCREATION...
WITHIN THE CONFINES OF MARRIAGE, THAT IS.
REMIND ME TO NEVER ASK YOU OUT ON A DATE!


THE CRAZIEST THING ABOUT ABORTION IS THAT WE'RE ALL OVER THE MAP WHEN IT COMES TO THAT DIFFICULT SUBJECT...
I'M AGAINST ABORTION...
EVEN THOUGH I HAD ONE LAST WEEK...
BUT LEMME TELL YA: IT WAS GROSS!
TECHNICALLY I'M PRO-CHOICE...
THOUGH I'D KILL ANY WOMAN WHO KILLED MY BABY...
MY D.N.A. IS SACRED TO ME!
I THINK IT'S MURDER...
NOT THAT A WOMAN SHOULD GO TO JAIL FOR HAVING ONE, OF COURSE...
THAT WOULD BE MEAN!
I SAY ALL ILLEGAL ALIENS SHOULD BE ABORTED!
DON'T YOU MEAN "DEPORTED"?
THAT TOO!
WHAT THE DEBATE IS REALLY ALL ABOUT IS POLICING OTHER PEOPLE'S SEXUAL BEHAVIOR -- WHICH WOULD PRESUMABLY LEAD TO A MORE ORDERLY SOCIETY...
THEY'RE STONING THAT COUPLE TO DEATH FOR HOLDING HANDS IN PUBLIC...
CARE TO WATCH, YOUR HIGHNESS?
NO, THANKS...
I'M EAGER TO GET TO MY ALL-ADOLESCENT BOY HAREM!
THOUGH IT ALSO WOULD LEAD TO A MORE UPTIGHT, REPRESSIVE, AND HYPOCRITICAL SOCIETY!
BEHAVIORAL CONTROL SEEMS TO BE DIRECTED PRIMARILY AT WOMEN, THROUGH BOTH LEGAL AND SOCIAL MEANS...
DO I HAVE TO WEAR THIS CHASTITY BELT UNDER MY PROM DRESS?
YES! AND DON'T YOU DARE TAKE IT OFF!
YOUNG MEN ARE LIKE SAVAGE BEASTS ONCE THEY'RE AROUSED, DEAR...
I SHOULD KNOW— I WAS YOUNG ONCE MYSELF, HA-HA!
THE LOGIC BEHIND THIS IS THAT FEMALES ARE THE GATEKEEPERS (BOTH LITERALLY AND FIGURATIVELY) WHEN IT COMES TO SEXUAL ACTIVITY -- WHILE WE MEN, APPARENTLY, ARE BEYOND ALL HOPE WHEN IT COMES TO SELF-CONTROL.
CITING THE BIBLE (OR THE KORAN) LENDS MORAL AUTHORITY TO THESE OUTDATED RULES AND RESTRICTIONS...
...THE MEN SHOUTED, "BRING OUT YOUR FRIEND SO THAT WE CAN HAVE ANAL SEX WITH HIM."
TO WHICH THE OLD MAN SAID, "DON'T BE SO VILE. HE IS MY GUEST."
"...LOOK, HERE IS MY VIRGIN DAUGHTER. YOU MAY DO WITH HER AS YOU PLEASE, BUT LEAVE MY GUEST ALONE..."*
?!?
WHY DID HE DO THAT?
BECAUSE HOMOSEXUALITY IS DISGUSTING, DEAR.
HOLY BIBLE
* THIS "MORAL" IS TOLD TWICE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT!
... EVEN THOUGH THESE ANCIENT TOMES HAPPEN TO BE THE MOST UNABASHEDLY MISOGYNISTIC BOOKS EVER WRITTEN!
"BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY" MAY HAVE BEEN SAGE ADVICE BACK WHEN LIFE WAS SHORT AND INFANT MORTALITY HIGH, BUT PROLIFIC PROCREATION IS THE LAST THING HUMANITY NEEDS THESE DAYS...
OUR SON JUST BLEW HIMSELF UP IN A SUICIDE ATTACK!
TO THE BEDROOM, QUICK!
WE MUST MAKE MORE MARTYRS RIGHT AWAY!
HURRY, BEFORE THE JEWS OUT-BREED US!
... UNLESS YOU THINK OF YOUR OWN OFFSPRING AS CANNON FODDER, THAT IS -- WHICH PEOPLE STILL DO BACK IN THE "HOLY LAND"!


MEANWHILE, BACK IN 21ST-CENTURY AMERICA, OUR PRESIDENT CONTINUES WITH HIS TOTALLY PUNK ROCK "MESSING UP THE SYSTEM FROM WITHIN" STRATEGY BY APPOINTING CONTRACEPTION OPPONENTS IN KEY POSITIONS, SUCH AS:
DR. DAVID HAGER, WHOSE (VERY) MINORITY REPORT TO THE F.D.A. ADVISING AGAINST OVER-THE-COUNTER STATUS FOR PLAN B LED TO IT REMAINING PRESCRIPTION-ONLY FOR TWO MORE YEARS.
"GOD TOOK THAT INFORMATION, AND USED IT THROUGH THIS MINORITY REPORT TO INFLUENCE THE DECISION."*
AS JESUS CARED FOR WOMEN
HAGER'S EX-WIFE HAS SINCE TOLD THE PRESS THAT THE GOOD DOCTOR USED TO ROUTINELY ANALLY RAPE HER IN HER SLEEP!
*WASHINGTON POST, 5/12/05
DR. ERIC KEROACK, WHO BRIEFLY WAS DEPUTY ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF "POPULATION AFFAIRS" AT H.H.S. BEFORE QUESTIONS ABOUT MEDICAID FRAUD FORCED HIS RESIGNATION.
"(PREMARITAL SEX) WILL END UP DAMAGING YOUR BRAIN'S ABILITY... TO HELP YOU SUCCESFULLY BOND IN FUTURE RELATIONSHIPS"...*
DUH...
*NY TIMES, 11/20/07
THAT'S RIGHT: HORMONES CAN TELL IF YOU'RE MARRIED! KEROACK ALSO RAN ONE OF THOSE BOGUS "WOMEN'S HEALTH" CLINICS WHOSE SOLE PURPOSE IS TO DISCOURAGE ABORTIONS.
KEROACK WAS REPLACED BY DR. SUSAN ORR, WHO OPPOSES GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR AND PROMOTION OF CONTRACEPTIVES...
INCLUDING CONTRACEPTIVES IN GOVERNMENT HEALTH CARE PLANS MAKES US ALL COLLABORATORS IN THE CULTURE OF DEATH..."
FERTILITY IS NOT A DISEASE!"
"REAL WOMEN STAY MARRIED" BY DR. S. ORR***
YET SHE HAS NO PROBLEM SPENDING PUBLIC MONEY ON INEFFECTIVE ABSTINENCE PROGRAMS (DISCLOSURE: ORR IS A FORMER DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL POLICY FOR THE REASON FOUNDATION). (*CBS NEWS, 10/19/07 **WASH. POST, 4/12/01, ***WASHINGTON WATCH, 6/00).
AND WHERE DID ALL OF THESE "CONSCIENTIOUS PHARMACISTS" SUDDENLY COME FROM? I CAN'T FIND A SINGLE RECORDED INSTANCE OF A DRUGGIST REFUSING TO FILL A LEGAL PRESCRIPTION FOR A DRUG OTHER THAN PLAN B!
AS A DEVOUT CHRISTIAN, I REFUSE TO ASSIST ANYONE IN PERFORMING ABORTIONS OR EUTHANASIA.
EUTHANASIA? TAKEN IN THE RIGHT (OR WRONG) DOSE, WOULDN'T THAT INCLUDE MOST OF WHAT A PHARMACY SELLS?
PLAN B'S CRITICS CLAIM IT WILL ENCOURAGE PROMISCUITY AMONG TEENAGERS, THOUGH THERE'S NO EVIDENCE TO BACK UP THIS CLAIM...
I CAN HEAR GRANDPA GETTIN' BUSY AGAIN...
IT'S SO GROSS!
NO KIDDING...
EVEN MY IPOD CAN'T DROWN HIM OUT!
I BLAME IT ON THOSE PILLS HE'S TAKING.
UGH! UGH!
MEANWHILE, VIAGRA HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THE SPREAD OF S.T.D.S AMONG THE ELDERLY, YET AS FAR AS I KNOW NO PHARMACIST HAS EVER REFUSED TO FILL A PRESCRIPTION FOR THAT DRUG!
IT'S HARD NOT TO CONCLUDE THAT PLAIN OL' RESENTMENT ALSO IS BEHIND ALL THIS CONTRACEPTIVE HATIN'. AND THESE MISERABLE WRETCHES HAVE WAY TOO EASY A TIME MAKING OTHERS FEEL GUILTY...
HMPF... IT SOUNDS LIKE EVERYONE'S GETTING LAID TONIGHT EXCEPT FOR ME AGAIN...
BUT THIS LETTER TO MY CONGRESSMAN WILL HELP PUT A STOP TO THEIR FUN!
OOH YEAH...
DO IT, BABY...
WHO'S YER DADDY...
UGH! UGH!
TO THIS I SAY, DON'T GIVE UP THE FIGHT! STICK IT TO THE MAN BY FORNICATING YOUR HEAD OFF! AND ALWAYS HAVE PLENTY OF PLAN B ON HAND, JUST IN CASE!

STUPID

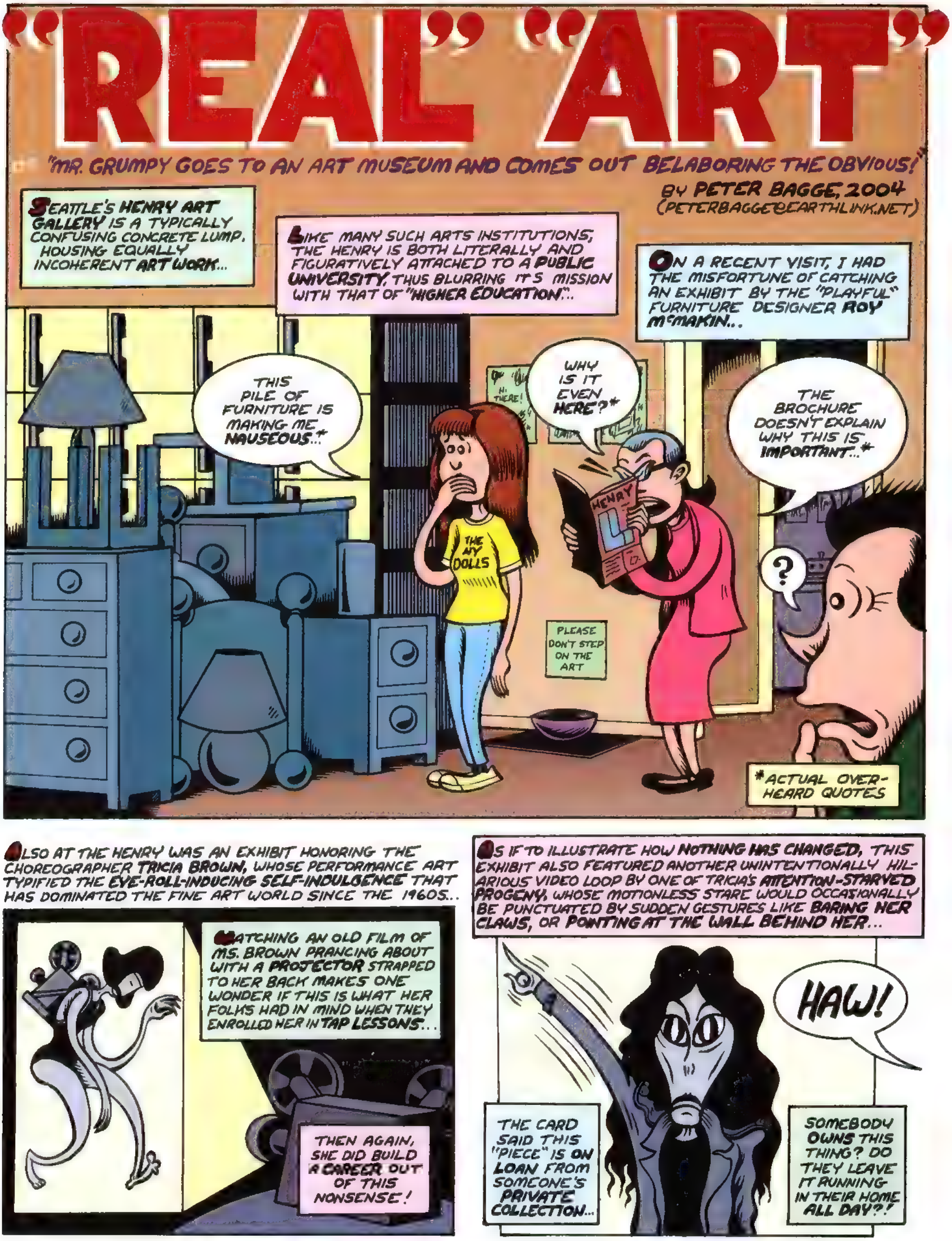
ARTS

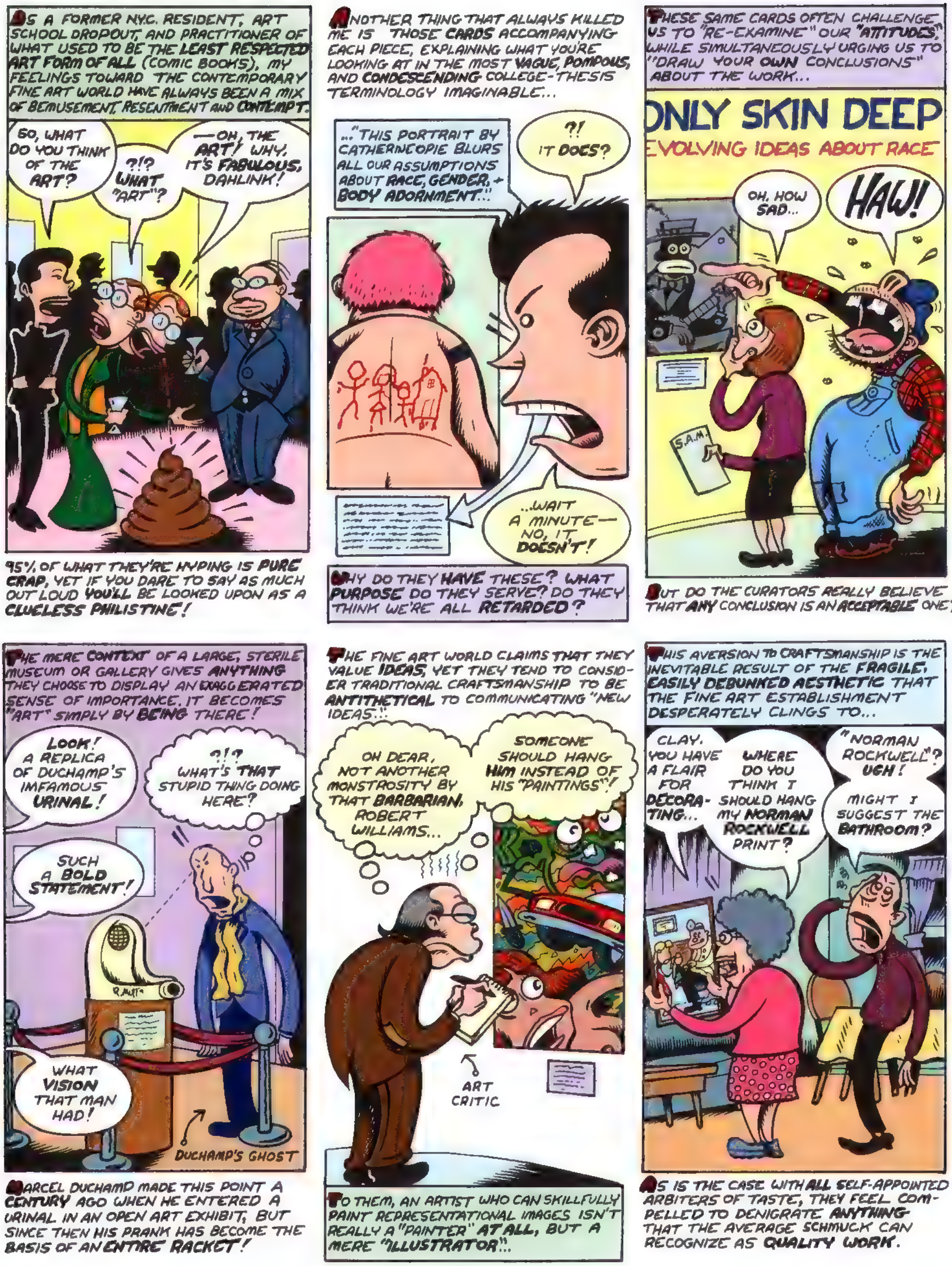
P. BAGGE '02

JUST SAY NO TO LIVE CLARINETS

PETERBAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET

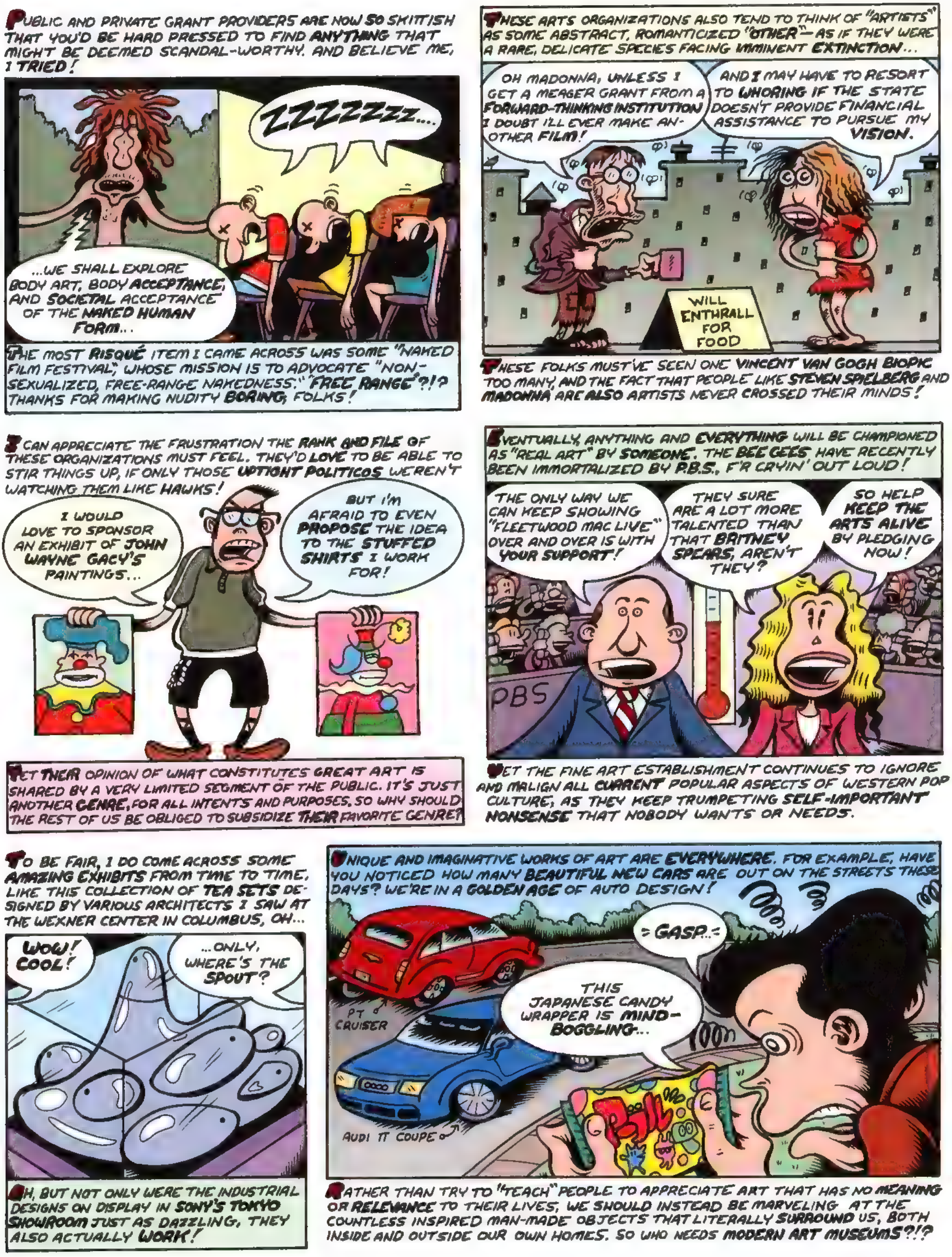
A POLITICS-FREE OSCAR SHOW?
NOW THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT!
©2001 BY P. BAGGE
OSCAR NIGHT! OH FREAKIN' BOY! WHILE MY FELLOW REVELLERS MADE THEIR PREDICTIONS AND RIDICULED THE STARS' GET-UPS, I WAITED IN DREAD FOR THE EMOTIONALLY CHARGED POLITICAL GRANDSTANDING THAT HAS BECOME AS MUCH OF AN ACADEMY AWARDS TRADITION AS THE NAKED MAN STATUE ITSELF...
AND THE AWARD GOES TO...
..."GLADIATOR!"
I SMELL A SWEEP FOR "TRAFFIC."
MAKE THAT "GLADIATOR."
LOOK! JENNIFER LOPEZ FORGOT TO PUT A BRA ON!
WHAT ABOUT "DUDE, WHERE'S MY CAR"?
AT LEAST ALEC BALDWIN WASN'T NOMINATED FOR ANYTHING.
NOTHING IS MORE ANNOYING—YET UNINTENTIONALLY HILARIOUS—THAN WATCHING THE MOST SELF-OBSESSED PEOPLE ON EARTH LECTURE THE REST OF US ABOUT ISSUES THEY FEEL WE DON'T CARE ENOUGH ABOUT.
THIS ISN'T ABOUT ME...
THIS IS ABOUT THE HOMELESS WHALES WHO SURVIVED THE HOLOCAUST!
APPLAUSE!
IMAGINE MY SURPRISE WHEN EVEN AMERICA'S MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMAN,™ JULIA ROBERTS, DIDN'T MAKE ANY "BOLD" PRONOUNCEMENTS, SINCE SHE'S RECENTLY BEEN ENCOURAGED TO SPEAK OUT AGAINST SUCH SOCIAL ILLS AS THE EXISTENCE OF GEORGE W. BUSH, WHOM SHE REFUSES TO ACKNOWLEDGE AS HER PRESIDENT.
THIS ISN'T ABOUT ME...
...THIS IS ABOUT MY OWN PERSONAL PRESIDENT, THE DALAI LAMA!
IN FACT, THIS YEAR'S TELECAST WAS COMPLETELY DEVOID OF ANY SUCH SELF-RIGHTEOUS BLEATINGS. HOST STEVE MARTIN EVEN MADE SOME JOKES AT HIS PEERS' EXPENSE IN A SEEMINGLY DELIBERATE ATTEMPT TO KEEP THEIR EGOS IN CHECK!
IT'S HARD TO MAKE A MARRIAGE LAST IN THIS BUSINESS...
..MAINLY BECAUSE WE ALL SLEEP WITH SO MANY PEOPLE!
HA HA HA HA
I HOPE HE'S NOT REFERRING TO ME!
SO THERE YOU HAVE IT: A POLITICALLY BENIGN AWARDS CEREMONY, JUST AS THE OLD STUDIO MOGULS INTENDED THEM TO BE! THOUGH YOU STILL HAVE TO WONDER ABOUT THE INDUSTRY POLITICS THAT SHOVES NO-TALENT SHOWBIZ BRATS LIKE KATE HUDSON DOWN OUR THROATS, OR NOMINATING RANDY NEWMAN FOR WRITING WHAT SOUNDS LIKE THE SAME SONG YEAR AFTER YEAR...
...AND WHEN IS SOMEBODY GONNA TELL BOB DYLAN THAT HE CAN'T SING?!?
..YA BA DEE BAH DAAAY..
THE SONG OF THE YEAR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!
....OR SHOULD I SAVE THAT RANT FOR THE GRAMMY AWARDS?

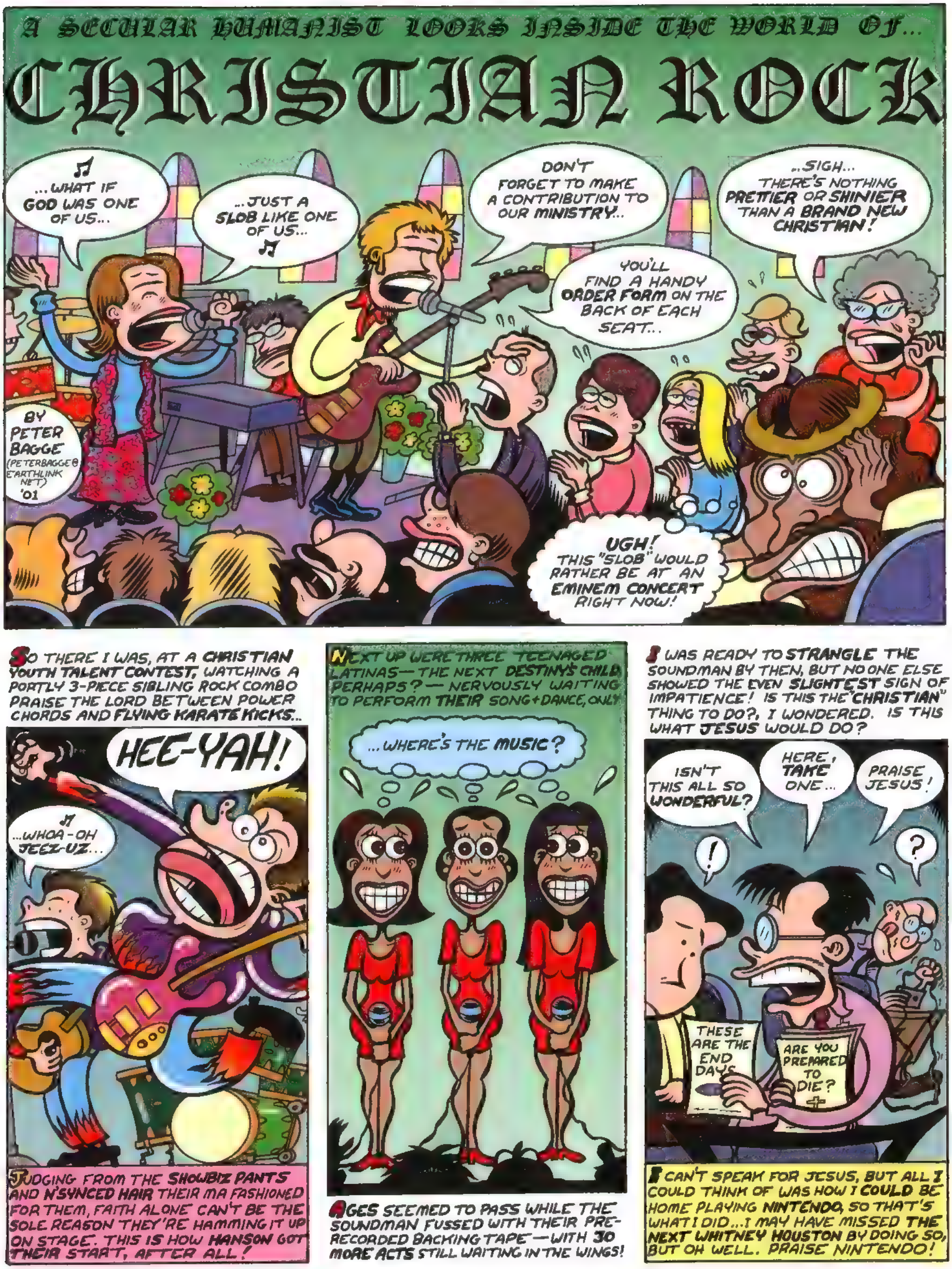

"REAL" "ART"
"MR. GRUMPY GOES TO AN ART MUSEUM AND COMES OUT BELABORING THE OBVIOUS!"
BY PETER BAGGE, 2004
(PETERBAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET)
SEATTLE'S HENRY ART GALLERY IS A TYPICALLY CONFUSING CONCRETE LUMP, HOUSING EQUALLY INCOHERENT ART WORK...
LIKE MANY SUCH ARTS INSTITUTIONS, THE HENRY IS BOTH LITERALLY AND FIGURATIVELY ATTACHED TO A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY, THUS BLURRING IT'S MISSION WITH THAT OF "HIGHER EDUCATION"...
ON A RECENT VISIT, I HAD THE MISFORTUNE OF CATCHING AN EXHIBIT BY THE "PLAYFUL" FURNITURE DESIGNER ROY McMAKIN...
THIS PILE OF FURNITURE IS MAKING ME NAUSEOUS...*
WHY IS IT EVEN HERE?*
THE BROCHURE DOESN'T EXPLAIN WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT...*
HENRY
?
PLEASE DON'T STEP ON THE ART
*ACTUAL OVER-HEARD QUOTES
ALSO AT THE HENRY WAS AN EXHIBIT HONORING THE CHOREOGRAPHER TRICIA BROWN, WHOSE PERFORMANCE ART TYPIFIED THE EYE-ROLL-INDUCING SELF-INDULGENCE THAT HAS DOMINATED THE FINE ART WORLD SINCE THE 1960S...
WATCHING AN OLD FILM OF MS. BROWN PRANCING ABOUT WITH A PROJECTOR STRAPPED TO HER BACK MAKES ONE WONDER IF THIS IS WHAT HER FOLKS HAD IN MIND WHEN THEY ENROLLED HER IN TAP LESSONS...
THEN AGAIN, SHE DID BUILD A CAREER OUT OF THIS NONSENSE!
AS IF TO ILLUSTRATE HOW NOTHING HAS CHANGED, THIS EXHIBIT ALSO FEATURED ANOTHER UNINTENTIONALLY HILARIOUS VIDEO LOOP BY ONE OF TRICIA'S ATTENTION-STARVED PROGENY, WHOSE MOTIONLESS STARE WOULD OCCASIONALLY BE PUNCTUATED BY SUDDEN GESTURES LIKE BARING HER CLAWS, OR POINTING AT THE WALL BEHIND HER...
HAW!
THE CARD SAID THIS "PIECE" IS ON LOAN FROM SOMEONE'S PRIVATE COLLECTION...
SOMEBODY OWNS THIS THING? DO THEY LEAVE IT RUNNING IN THEIR HOME ALL DAY?!



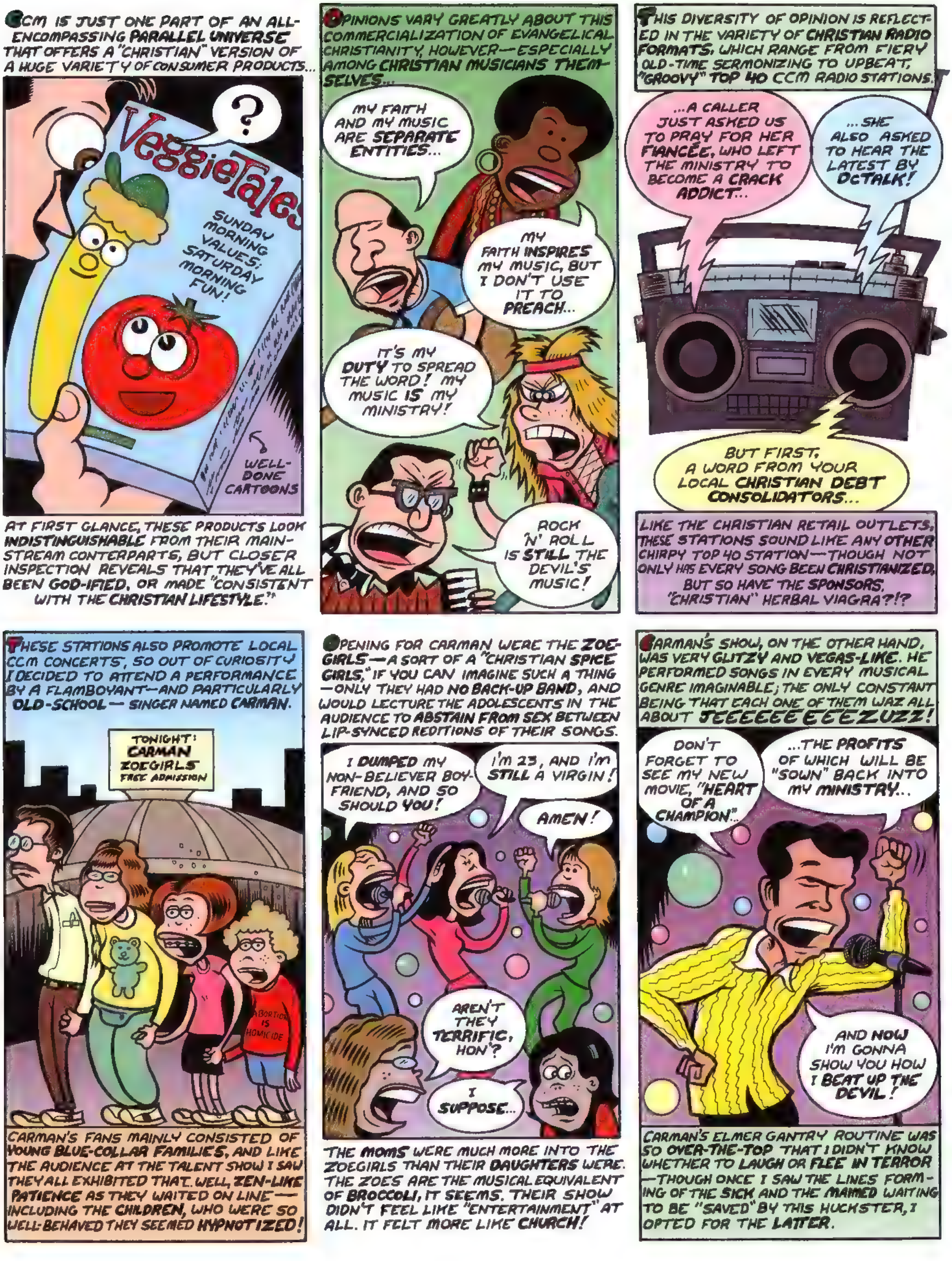
AS A FORMER N.Y.C. RESIDENT, ART SCHOOL DROPOUT, AND PRACTITIONER OF WHAT USED TO BE THE LEAST RESPECTED ART FORM OF ALL (COMIC BOOKS), MY FEELINGS TOWARD THE CONTEMPORARY FINE ART WORLD HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A MIX OF BEMUSEMENT, RESENTMENT AND CONTEMPT.
SO, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE ART?
?!? WHAT "ART"?
—OH, THE ART! WHY, IT'S FABULOUS, DAHLINK!
95% OF WHAT THEY'RE HYPING IS PURE CRAP, YET IF YOU DARE TO SAY AS MUCH OUT LOUD YOU'LL BE LOOKED UPON AS A CLUELESS PHILISTINE!
ANOTHER THING THAT ALWAYS KILLED ME IS THOSE CARDS ACCOMPANYING EACH PIECE, EXPLAINING WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING AT IN THE MOST VAGUE, POMPOUS, AND CONDESCENDING COLLEGE-THESIS TERMINOLOGY IMAGINABLE...
..."THIS PORTRAIT BY CATHERINE OPIE BLURS ALL OUR ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT RACE, GENDER, + BODY ADORNMENT."
?! IT DOES?
...WAIT A MINUTE— NO, IT DOESN'T!
WHY DO THEY HAVE THESE? WHAT PURPOSE DO THEY SERVE? DO THEY THINK WE'RE ALL RETARDED?
THESE SAME CARDS OFTEN CHALLENGE US TO "RE-EXAMINE" OUR "ATTITUDES," WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY URGING US TO "DRAW YOUR OWN CONCLUSIONS" ABOUT THE WORK...
ONLY SKIN DEEP
EVOLVING IDEAS ABOUT RACE
OH, HOW SAD...
HAW!
S.A.M.
BUT DO THE CURATORS REALLY BELIEVE THAT ANY CONCLUSION IS AN ACCEPTABLE ONE?
THE MERE CONTEXT OF A LARGE, STERILE MUSEUM OR GALLERY GIVES ANYTHING THEY CHOOSE TO DISPLAY AN EXAGGERATED SENSE OF IMPORTANCE. IT BECOMES "ART" SIMPLY BY BEING THERE!
LOOK! A REPLICA OF DUCHAMP'S INFAMOUS URINAL!
?!? WHAT'S THAT STUPID THING DOING HERE?
SUCH A BOLD STATEMENT!
WHAT VISION THAT MAN HAD!
R. MUTT
DUCHAMP'S GHOST
MARCEL DUCHAMP MADE THIS POINT A CENTURY AGO WHEN HE ENTERED A URINAL IN AN OPEN ART EXHIBIT, BUT SINCE THEN HIS PRANK HAS BECOME THE BASIS OF AN ENTIRE RACKET!
THE FINE ART WORLD CLAIMS THAT THEY VALUE IDEAS, YET THEY TEND TO CONSIDER TRADITIONAL CRAFTSMANSHIP TO BE ANTITHETICAL TO COMMUNICATING "NEW IDEAS."
OH DEAR, NOT ANOTHER MONSTROSITY BY THAT BARBARIAN, ROBERT WILLIAMS...
SOMEONE SHOULD HANG HIM INSTEAD OF HIS "PAINTINGS"!
ART CRITIC
TO THEM, AN ARTIST WHO CAN SKILLFULLY PAINT REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGES ISN'T REALLY A "PAINTER" AT ALL, BUT A MERE "ILLUSTRATOR."
THIS AVERSION TO CRAFTSMANSHIP IS THE INEVITABLE RESULT OF THE FRAGILE, EASILY DEBUNKED AESTHETIC THAT THE FINE ART ESTABLISHMENT DESPERATELY CLINGS TO...
CLAY, YOU HAVE A FLAIR FOR DECORATING...
WHERE DO YOU THINK I SHOULD HANG MY NORMAN ROCKWELL PRINT?
"NORMAN ROCKWELL"? UGH! MIGHT I SUGGEST THE BATHROOM?
AS IS THE CASE WITH ALL SELF-APPOINTED ARBITERS OF TASTE, THEY FEEL COMPELLED TO DENIGRATE ANYTHING THAT THE AVERAGE SCHMUCK CAN RECOGNIZE AS QUALITY WORK.

THIS SAME "FINE ART ESTABLISHMENT" IS ALSO LOCKED IN AN ENDLESS CULTURE WAR WITH AMERICA'S TRADITIONAL MAINSTREAM VALUES...
YOUR GODLESS "ART GALLERY" SHOULD BE BANNED FROM THIS COMMUNITY!
OH YEAH? WELL, I HEREBY BAN GOD FROM MY GALLERY!
TRANS-GENDER FILM FESTIVAL
THE UPPER SANDUSKY CENTER OF THE ARTS
AMERIKKKA SUX GROUP SHOW JUL. 4th
THEY SEE THEMSELVES AS WAGING A WAR AGAINST CULTURAL OPPRESSION, AND IN A SENSE THEY'RE RIGHT, IF YOU OVERLOOK THE FACT THAT THEIR OWN VALUES ARE JUST AS ORTHODOX AS THEIR ENEMIES'.
THIS CULTURAL WAR CAME TO A NOISY HEAD IN THE LATE '80s, WHEN ARCH-CONSERVATIVE SENATOR JESSE HELMS MADE A BIG STINK OVER THE FEDERAL FUNDING OF A PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT FEATURING THE HOMOEROTIC WORK OF ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE, AS WELL AS ANDREAS SERRANO'S NOTORIOUS "PISS CHRIST"...
?!?
NO DISTINCTION WAS MADE IN THIS DEBATE OVER THE QUALITY OF THESE WORKS, THUS FOREVER LINKING MAPPLETHORPE'S EXCELLENT (AND COMMERCIALLY SUCCESSFUL) PHOTOS WITH SERRANO'S WITLESS, JUVENILE PRANK IN THE PUBLIC'S MIND.
THE N.E.A.'S DEFENDERS LOST THAT PARTICULAR BATTLE, AND DESERVEDLY SO, SINCE OFFENDING AND INSULTING PEOPLE IS ONE THING, BUT BILLING THEM FOR IT IS REALLY PUSHING IT. LIKE, DUH!
...IF SOME LITTLE OLD LADY IS ALLOWED TO LIMIT THE FREE EXPRESSION OF AN IMPORTANT ARTIST LIKE SERRANO, WHY, BEFORE YOU KNOW IT NO ONE WILL BE PERMITTED TO PHOTOGRAPH ANYTHING!
IT'S A SLIPPERY SLOPE!
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS
THEN AGAIN, ALL THE OUTRAGE DIRECTED AT "PISS CHRIST" WAS EQUALLY ABSURD, SINCE THAT WAS PRECISELY THE REACTION IT WAS MEANT TO PROVOKE!
SUPPORTERS OF THE N.E.A. LOVE TO MAKE THIS TIRED "FOR THE MERE PRICE OF A CUP OF COFFEE" ARGUMENT WHEN POINTING OUT THE RELATIVE COST OF ARTS FUNDING TO THE AVERAGE TAXPAYER...
WHY, FOR EVERY DOLLAR OUR GOVERNMENT SPENDS ON THE ARTS, THEY SPEND A GAZILLION DOLLARS ON THE PENTAGON WAR MACHINE!
GOSH, I NEVER THOUGHT OF IT THAT WAY...
'CUZ WAR IS A BAD THING TOO, RIGHT?
...WHILE BLITHELY IGNORING THE FACT THAT NO ONE EVER WENT TO JAIL FOR REFUSING TO BUY A CUP OF COFFEE!
THEN THERE'S THIS BOGUS DISTINCTION BETWEEN "DIRECT" AND "NON DIRECT" FUNDING, SINCE THE LATTER IS JUST A CLEVER WAY FOR GRANT PROVIDERS TO COVER THEIR TRACKS...
(PSST! TAKE YOUR CUT AND PASS IT ON...
HERE'S YOUR GRANT, MR. ARTIST! NOW GO CREATE!
?!?
FOUR DOLLARS?
AND WITH THE FEDS FUNDING STATE-RUN "ART COUNCILS" THAT THEN FUND PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS, IT'S A BUNCH OF PAPER-PUSHING BUREAUCRATS TAKING UP THE LION'S SHARE OF OUR PRECIOUS ART FUNDING.
TO AVOID FURTHER CONTROVERSY, THE N.E.A. NOW MOSTLY BACKS "SAFE" INSTITUTIONS LIKE SYMPHONIES AND BALLET COMPANIES, WHOSE AVERAGE TICKET PRICES OF $50.00 BELIE THE NOTION THAT THEY'RE BRINGING "THE ARTS" TO THE UNWASHED MASSES.
YOU NEED ME, DES MOINES...
GAAAH! "ZOMBIE BILL" IS BACK!
CAN'T WE JUST WATCH RE-RUNS OF "FRASIER" INSTEAD?
AND NOW THERE ARE ALL THESE HEAVILY FUNDED SHAKESPEARE COMPANIES CURRENTLY PLAGUING THE NATION. HEAVEN FORBID A SINGLE COMMUNITY SHOULD LIVE WITHOUT THE BARD'S HOKEY, UNINTELLIGIBLE 400-YR.-OLD SITUATION COMEDIES!

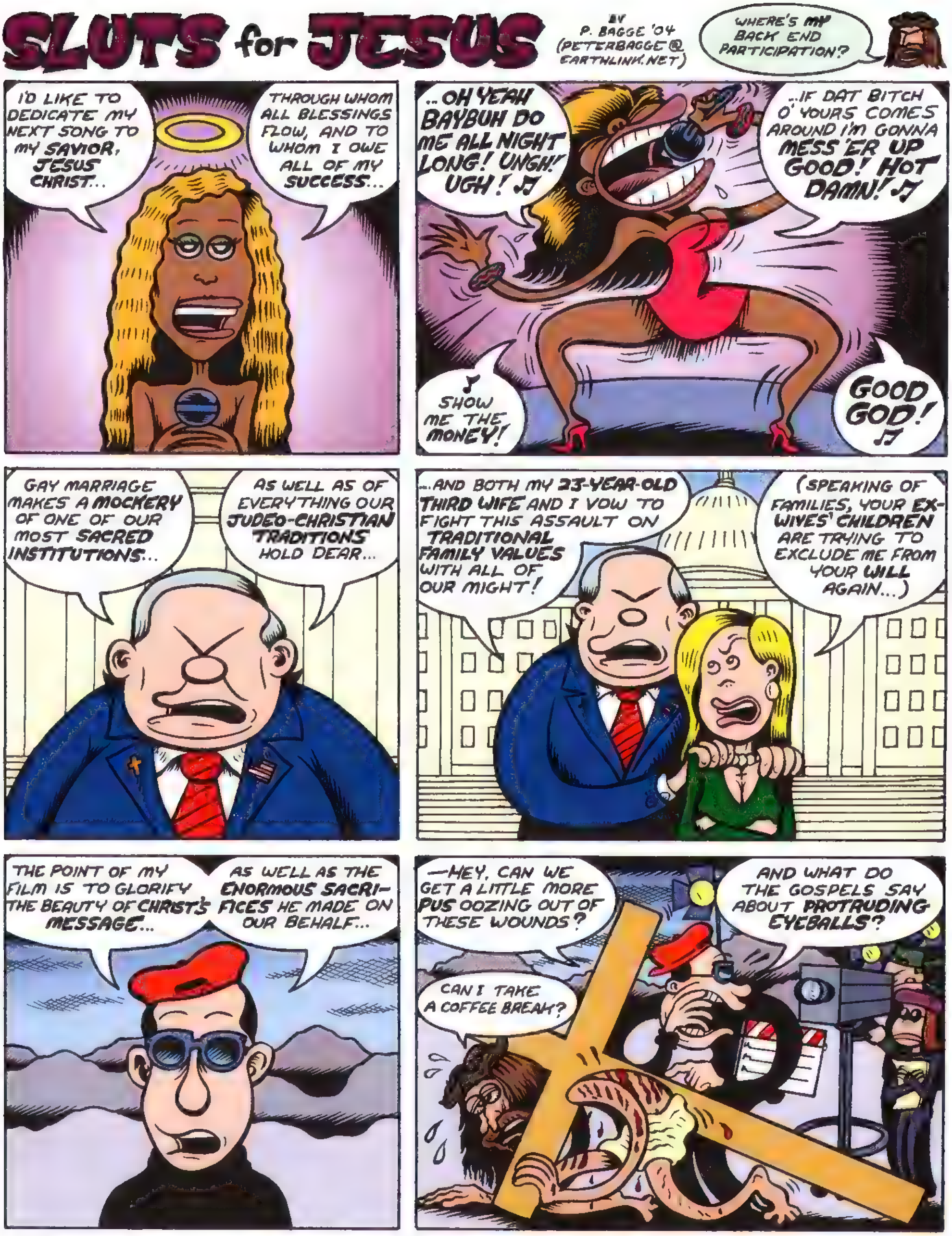

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE GRANT PROVIDERS ARE NOW SO SKITTISH THAT YOU'D BE HARD PRESSED TO FIND ANYTHING THAT MIGHT BE DEEMED SCANDAL-WORTHY. AND BELIEVE ME, I TRIED!
ZZZZZZzz...
...WE SHALL EXPLORE BODY ART, BODY ACCEPTANCE, AND SOCIETAL ACCEPTANCE OF THE NAKED HUMAN FORM...
THE MOST RISQUÉ ITEM I CAME ACROSS WAS SOME "NAKED FILM FESTIVAL," WHOSE MISSION IS TO ADVOCATE "NON-SEXUALIZED, FREE-RANGE NAKEDNESS." "FREE RANGE"?!? THANKS FOR MAKING NUDITY BORING, FOLKS!
THESE ARTS ORGANIZATIONS ALSO TEND TO THINK OF "ARTISTS" AS SOME ABSTRACT, ROMANTICIZED "OTHER"—AS IF THEY WERE A RARE, DELICATE SPECIES FACING IMMINENT EXTINCTION...
OH MADONNA, UNLESS I GET A MEAGER GRANT FROM A FORWARD-THINKING INSTITUTION I DOUBT I'LL EVER MAKE ANOTHER FILM!
AND I MAY HAVE TO RESORT TO WHORING IF THE STATE DOESN'T PROVIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO PURSUE MY VISION.
WILL ENTHRALL FOR FOOD
THESE FOLKS MUST'VE SEEN ONE VINCENT VAN GOGH BIOPIC TOO MANY, AND THE FACT THAT PEOPLE LIKE STEVEN SPIELBERG AND MADONNA ARE ALSO ARTISTS NEVER CROSSED THEIR MINDS!
I CAN APPRECIATE THE FRUSTRATION THE RANK AND FILE OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS MUST FEEL. THEY'D LOVE TO BE ABLE TO STIR THINGS UP, IF ONLY THOSE UPTIGHT POLITICOS WEREN'T WATCHING THEM LIKE HAWKS!
I WOULD LOVE TO SPONSOR AN EXHIBIT OF JOHN WAYNE GACY'S PAINTINGS...
BUT I'M AFRAID TO EVEN PROPOSE THE IDEA TO THE STUFFED SHIRTS I WORK FOR!
YET THEIR OPINION OF WHAT CONSTITUTES GREAT ART IS SHARED BY A VERY LIMITED SEGMENT OF THE PUBLIC. IT'S JUST ANOTHER GENRE, FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES, SO WHY SHOULD THE REST OF US BE OBLIGED TO SUBSIDIZE THEIR FAVORITE GENRE?
EVENTUALLY, ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING WILL BE CHAMPIONED AS "REAL ART" BY SOMEONE. THE BEE GEES HAVE RECENTLY BEEN IMMORTALIZED BY P.B.S., F'R CRYIN' OUT LOUD!
THE ONLY WAY WE CAN KEEP SHOWING "FLEETWOOD MAC LIVE" OVER AND OVER IS WITH YOUR SUPPORT!
THEY SURE ARE A LOT MORE TALENTED THAN THAT BRITNEY SPEARS, AREN'T THEY?
SO HELP KEEP THE ARTS ALIVE BY PLEDGING NOW!
PBS
YET THE FINE ART ESTABLISHMENT CONTINUES TO IGNORE AND MALIGN ALL CURRENT POPULAR ASPECTS OF WESTERN POP CULTURE, AS THEY KEEP TRUMPETING SELF-IMPORTANT NONSENSE THAT NOBODY WANTS OR NEEDS.
TO BE FAIR, I DO COME ACROSS SOME AMAZING EXHIBITS FROM TIME TO TIME, LIKE THIS COLLECTION OF TEA SETS DESIGNED BY VARIOUS ARCHITECTS I SAW AT THE WEXNER CENTER IN COLUMBUS, OH...
WOW! COOL!
...ONLY, WHERE'S THE SPOUT?
AH, BUT NOT ONLY WERE THE INDUSTRIAL DESIGNS ON DISPLAY IN SONY'S TOKYO SHOWROOM JUST AS DAZZLING, THEY ALSO ACTUALLY WORK!
UNIQUE AND IMAGINATIVE WORKS OF ART ARE EVERYWHERE. FOR EXAMPLE, HAVE YOU NOTICED HOW MANY BEAUTIFUL NEW CARS ARE OUT ON THE STREETS THESE DAYS? WE'RE IN A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTO DESIGN!
GASP
PT CRUISER
THIS JAPANESE CANDY WRAPPER IS MIND-BOGGLING...
AUDI TT COUPE
RATHER THAN TRY TO "TEACH" PEOPLE TO APPRECIATE ART THAT HAS NO MEANING OR RELEVANCE TO THEIR LIVES, WE SHOULD INSTEAD BE MARVELING AT THE COUNTLESS INSPIRED MAN-MADE OBJECTS THAT LITERALLY SURROUND US, BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OUR OWN HOMES. SO WHO NEEDS MODERN ART MUSEUMS?!?


A SECULAR HUMANIST LOOKS INSIDE THE WORLD OF...
CHRISTIAN ROCK
♫ ...WHAT IF GOD WAS ONE OF US...
...JUST A SLOB LIKE ONE OF US... ♫
DON'T FORGET TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TO OUR MINISTRY...
YOU'LL FIND A HANDY ORDER FORM ON THE BACK OF EACH SEAT...
..SIGH... THERE'S NOTHING PRETTIER OR SHINIER THAN A BRAND NEW CHRISTIAN!
BY PETER BAGGE (PETERBAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET) '01
UGH! THIS "SLOB" WOULD RATHER BE AT AN EMINEM CONCERT RIGHT NOW!
SO THERE I WAS, AT A CHRISTIAN YOUTH TALENT CONTEST, WATCHING A PORTLY 3-PIECE SIBLING ROCK COMBO PRAISE THE LORD BETWEEN POWER CHORDS AND FLYING KARATE KICKS...
HEE-YAH!
♫ ...WHOA-OH JEEZ-UZ...
JUDGING FROM THE SHOWBIZ PANTS AND N'SYNCED HAIR THEIR MA FASHIONED FOR THEM, FAITH ALONE CAN'T BE THE SOLE REASON THEY'RE HAMMING IT UP ON STAGE. THIS IS HOW HANSON GOT THEIR START, AFTER ALL!
NEXT UP WERE THREE TEENAGED LATINAS— THE NEXT DESTINY'S CHILD PERHAPS?— NERVOUSLY WAITING TO PERFORM THEIR SONG+DANCE, ONLY
...WHERE'S THE MUSIC?
AGES SEEMED TO PASS WHILE THE SOUNDMAN FUSSED WITH THEIR PRE-RECORDED BACKING TAPE —WITH 30 MORE ACTS STILL WAITING IN THE WINGS!
I WAS READY TO STRANGLE THE SOUNDMAN BY THEN, BUT NO ONE ELSE SHOWED THE EVEN SLIGHTEST SIGN OF IMPATIENCE! IS THIS THE "CHRISTIAN" THING TO DO?, I WONDERED. IS THIS WHAT JESUS WOULD DO?
ISN'T THIS ALL SO WONDERFUL?
HERE, TAKE ONE...
PRAISE JESUS!
!
?
THESE ARE THE END DAYS
ARE YOU PREPARED TO DIE?
I CAN'T SPEAK FOR JESUS, BUT ALL I COULD THINK OF WAS HOW I COULD BE HOME PLAYING NINTENDO, SO THAT'S WHAT I DID... I MAY HAVE MISSED THE NEXT WHITNEY HOUSTON BY DOING SO, BUT OH WELL. PRAISE NINTENDO!

MUSIC HAS BEEN A BATTLEGROUND BETWEEN RELIGION AND THE MASSES SINCE DAY ONE, WITH THE FORMER CONSTANTLY CHANGING ITS STANCE ON WHAT THE LATTER CAN OR CAN'T LISTEN TO...
HALF OF OUR PARISHIONERS ARE DYING FROM THE PLAGUE...
HOW CAN YOU WORRY ABOUT SUCH TRIFLES WHEN THERE ARE POINTY-TOED FLUTISTS AMONG US?!?
DURING THE BLACK PLAGUE, ONE OF THE CHURCH'S MAIN CONCERNS WAS THE EFFECT THAT FLUTES (ALONG WITH THE FASHION CRAZE FOR POINTY-TOED SHOES) WAS HAVING ON YOUNG PEOPLE!
UNTIL THE 1920S, THE ONLY MUSIC ALLOWED EVEN IN SOUTHERN BLACK CHURCHES WERE TRADITIONAL HYMNS, UNTIL A STRUGGLING SONGWRITER NAMED THOMAS DORSEY HIT UPON THE IDEA OF ADDING BIBLICALLY INSPIRED LYRICS TO CONTEMPORARY JAZZ AND BLUES STANDARDS...
THE IDEA IS TO USE THE MUSIC THAT KIDS ARE LISTENING TO ANYWAY TO PREACH THE WORD TO 'EM!
THERE'LL BE NO DEVIL MUSIC IN MY CHURCH!
DORSEY'S NEWLY-COINED "GOSPEL" MUSIC MET WITH MUCH RESISTANCE AT FIRST, UNTIL THE DEPRESSION AND DWINDLING CONGREGATIONS CAUSED DESPERATE PASTORS TO RECONSIDER.
BY THE 1940S, BLACK BAPTISTS AND GOSPEL MUSIC WERE VIRTUALLY SYNONYMOUS, AND THIS NEW MUSIC CAUGHT ON IN WHITE CHURCHES AS WELL, IN THE FORM OF "COUNTRY" GOSPEL...
HMMM... MAYBE THOSE COLOREDS ARE ON TO SOMETHING...
...OH JESUS, HE GAVE ME WATER...
AN ENTIRE INDUSTRY EVOLVED AROUND THIS POPULAR NEW "CHURCH" MUSIC, WITH PERFORMERS TOURING THE "GOSPEL CIRCUIT," AND RECORDING FOR FLEDGLING CHRISTIAN RECORD LABELS.
BY THE '50S, GOSPEL STARS LIKE SAM COOKE CAVED INTO TEMPTATION AND "CROSSED OVER" TO THE POTENTIALLY MORE LUCRATIVE POP MARKET. SUCH DEFECTIONS WERE LOUDLY CONDEMNED BY THE INCREASINGLY SANCTIMONIOUS GOSPEL MUSIC WORLD...
BUT, I STILL WANT TO SING IN CHURCH—
YOU'VE MADE YOUR CHOICE, SON...
AWW, LET HIM SING, PA—
YOU KEEP OUT OF THIS!
THEY ALSO DEEMED IT SACRILEGE WHEN SINGERS LIKE RAY CHARLES ADDED "SECULAR" LYRICS TO "GOSPEL" RHYTHMS AND MELODIES, CONVENIENTLY FORGETTING THAT GOSPEL ITSELF WAS ROOTED IN SUCH BORROWING.
THE RIFT BETWEEN THE SACRED AND PROFANE ONLY WIDENED BY THE '60S, WITH CHURCH LEADERS HYSTERICALLY DENOUNCING THE INCREASINGLY REBELLIOUS MUSIC OF THAT ERA...
...PUT YOUR HAND IN THE HAND OF THE MAN....
LET'S ALL HUG EACH OTHER!
D-DO WE HAVE TO?
I LOVE ALL OF YOU!
HAROLD, DO SOMETHING!
YET IN AN ODD TWIST, SO-CALLED JESUS FREAKS STARTED PLAYING WHAT THEY CALLED JESUS ROCK, AND BY THE '70S WERE PERFORMING FOLK SERVICES TO VERY MIXED REACTIONS FROM THE MORE CONSERVATIVE CONGREGATIONS.
JESUS ROCK EVENTUALLY EVOLVED INTO THE STYLISTIC CATCH-ALL TERM OF "CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN MUSIC" (OR "CCM"), AND ITS POPULARITY SURGED DURING THE "BORN AGAIN" MOVEMENT OF THE 1980S...
YO YO YO! DA LORD IS IN THE HOUSE! Y'KNOWWHAT I'MSAYIN'?
LET'S HEAR IT FOR THIS MARVELOUS YOUNG CHRISTIAN RAPPER!
APPLAUSE!
TOP CCM ACTS NOW PERFORM IN SUBURBAN "MEGA-CHURCHES" THAT SEAT THOUSANDS, YET JUST LIKE IN THE 1930S THIS CHRISTIANIZATION OF CONTEMPORARY POP MUSIC IS DESIGNED TO KEEP YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE FOLD.

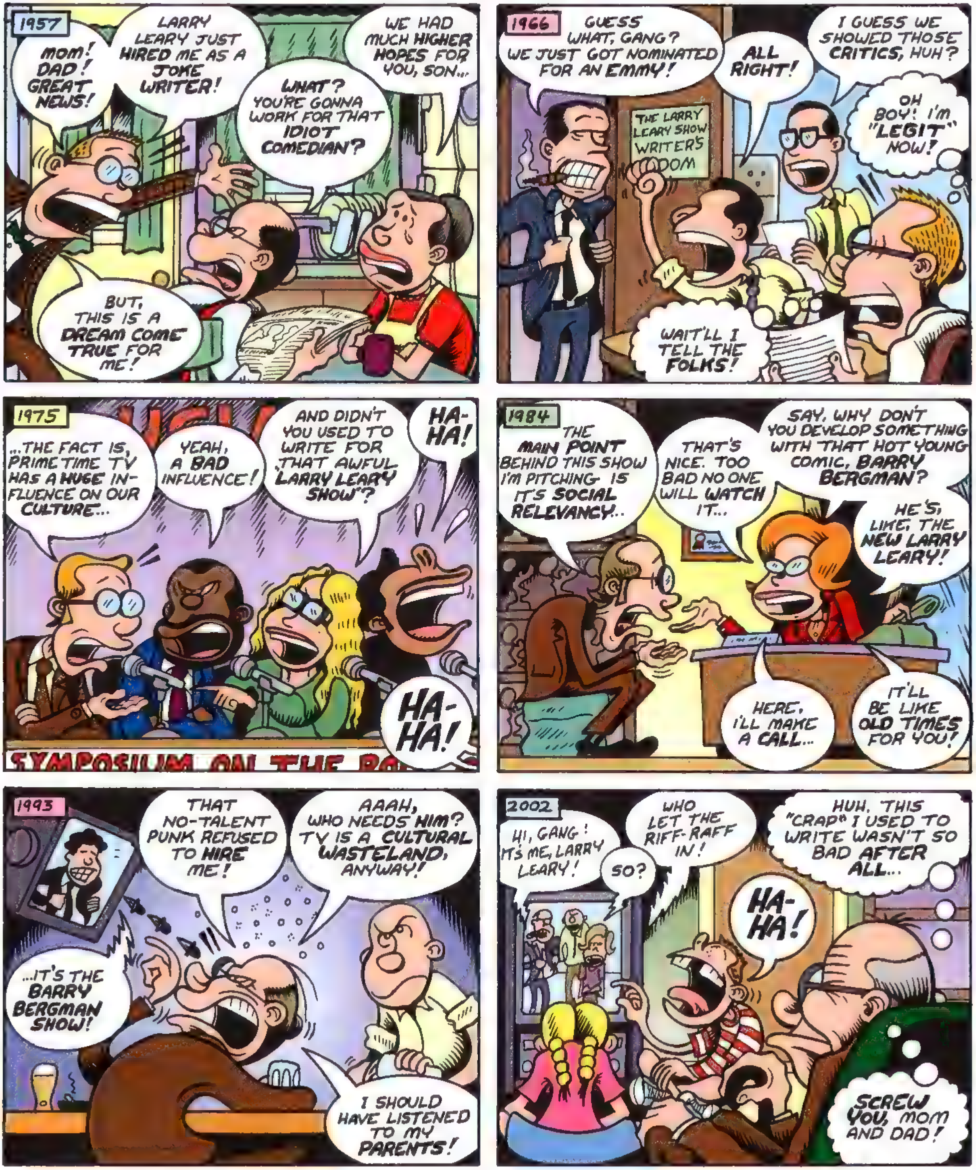

CCM IS JUST ONE PART OF AN ALL-ENCOMPASSING PARALLEL UNIVERSE THAT OFFERS A "CHRISTIAN" VERSION OF A HUGE VARIETY OF CONSUMER PRODUCTS...
?
VeggieTales
SUNDAY MORNING VALUES; SATURDAY MORNING FUN!
WELL-DONE CARTOONS
AT FIRST GLANCE, THESE PRODUCTS LOOK INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM THEIR MAINSTREAM CONTERPARTS, BUT CLOSER INSPECTION REVEALS THAT THEY'VE ALL BEEN GOD-IFIED, OR MADE "CONSISTENT WITH THE CHRISTIAN LIFESTYLE."
OPINIONS VARY GREATLY ABOUT THIS COMMERCIALIZATION OF EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY, HOWEVER—ESPECIALLY AMONG CHRISTIAN MUSICIANS THEMSELVES...
MY FAITH AND MY MUSIC ARE SEPARATE ENTITIES...
MY FAITH INSPIRES MY MUSIC, BUT I DON'T USE IT TO PREACH...
IT'S MY DUTY TO SPREAD THE WORD! MY MUSIC IS MY MINISTRY!
ROCK 'N' ROLL IS STILL THE DEVIL'S MUSIC!
THIS DIVERSITY OF OPINION IS REFLECTED IN THE VARIETY OF CHRISTIAN RADIO FORMATS, WHICH RANGE FROM FIERY OLD-TIME SERMONIZING TO UPBEAT, "GROOVY" TOP 40 CCM RADIO STATIONS.
...A CALLER JUST ASKED US TO PRAY FOR HER FIANCÉE, WHO LEFT THE MINISTRY TO BECOME A CRACK ADDICT...
...SHE ALSO ASKED TO HEAR THE LATEST BY DCTALK!
BUT FIRST, A WORD FROM YOUR LOCAL CHRISTIAN DEBT CONSOLIDATORS...
LIKE THE CHRISTIAN RETAIL OUTLETS, THESE STATIONS SOUND LIKE ANY OTHER CHIRPY TOP 40 STATION—THOUGH NOT ONLY HAS EVERY SONG BEEN CHRISTIANIZED, BUT SO HAVE THE SPONSORS. "CHRISTIAN" HERBAL VIAGRA?!?
THESE STATIONS ALSO PROMOTE LOCAL CCM CONCERTS, SO OUT OF CURIOSITY I DECIDED TO ATTEND A PERFORMANCE BY A FLAMBOYANT—AND PARTICULARLY OLD-SCHOOL—SINGER NAMED CARMAN.
TONIGHT: CARMAN ZOEGIRLS FREE ADMISSION
ABORTION IS HOMICIDE
CARMAN'S FANS MAINLY CONSISTED OF YOUNG BLUE-COLLAR FAMILIES, AND LIKE THE AUDIENCE AT THE TALENT SHOW I SAW THEY ALL EXHIBITED THAT, WELL, ZEN-LIKE PATIENCE AS THEY WAITED ON LINE—INCLUDING THE CHILDREN, WHO WERE SO WELL-BEHAVED THEY SEEMED HYPNOTIZED!
OPENING FOR CARMAN WERE THE ZOEGIRLS—A SORT OF A "CHRISTIAN SPICE GIRLS," IF YOU CAN IMAGINE SUCH A THING—ONLY THEY HAD NO BACK-UP BAND, AND WOULD LECTURE THE ADOLESCENTS IN THE AUDIENCE TO ABSTAIN FROM SEX BETWEEN LIP-SYNCED REDITIONS OF THEIR SONGS.
I DUMPED MY NON-BELIEVER BOYFRIEND, AND SO SHOULD YOU!
I'M 23, AND I'M STILL A VIRGIN!
AMEN!
AREN'T THEY TERRIFIC, HON'?
I SUPPOSE...
THE MOMS WERE MUCH MORE INTO THE ZOEGIRLS THAN THEIR DAUGHTERS WERE. THE ZOES ARE THE MUSICAL EQUIVALENT OF BROCCOLI, IT SEEMS. THEIR SHOW DIDN'T FEEL LIKE "ENTERTAINMENT" AT ALL. IT FELT MORE LIKE CHURCH!
CARMAN'S SHOW, ON THE OTHER HAND, WAS VERY GLITZY AND VEGAS-LIKE. HE PERFORMED SONGS IN EVERY MUSICAL GENRE IMAGINABLE; THE ONLY CONSTANT BEING THAT EACH ONE OF THEM WAZ ALL ABOUT JEEEEEE EEEZUZZ!
DON'T FORGET TO SEE MY NEW MOVIE, "HEART OF A CHAMPION"...
...THE PROFITS OF WHICH WILL BE "SOWN" BACK INTO MY MINISTRY...
AND NOW I'M GONNA SHOW YOU HOW I BEAT UP THE DEVIL!
CARMAN'S ELMER GANTRY ROUTINE WAS SO OVER-THE-TOP THAT I DIDN'T KNOW WHETHER TO LAUGH OR FLEE IN TERROR—THOUGH ONCE I SAW THE LINES FORMING OF THE SICK AND THE MAIMED WAITING TO BE "SAVED" BY THIS HUCKSTER, I OPTED FOR THE LATTER.

I LATER ATTENDED AN "ALTERNATIVE" CHRISTIAN ROCK SHOW, WHERE SUCH OLD-SCHOOL PREACHING AND COLLECTION PLATE PASSING ARE FROWNED UPON, AS ARE THE RELENTLESS REFERENCES TO JESUS...
THIS SONG IS ABOUT THE... EXISTENTIAL ENNUI I FELT WHILE, UH, CONTEMPLATING THE GREAT BEYOND 'N' STUFF..
THAT IS, UNTIL I FOUND PEACE OF MIND THROUGH... WELL, YOU KNOW WHO...
THEIR LYRICS STILL HAVE TO PASS A SELF-IMPOSED SCRIPTURAL LITMUS TEST, HOWEVER, SO THE USUAL TEEN THEMES OF PARTYING AND ROMANCE ARE AVOIDED AS WELL—RESULTING IN A LOT OF LYRICALLY VAGUE SONGS THAT DON'T SEEM TO BE ABOUT ANYTHING!
AS WITH THE PREVIOUS SHOWS, MANY PARENTS WERE IN ATTENDANCE, EXPOSING THEIR KIDS TO MUSIC THAT'S "GOOD FOR THEM". AND AS ALWAYS, EVERYONE WAS INCREDIBLY PATIENT AND WELL-BEHAVED...
THIS IS OUR FAVORITE BAND—RIGHT, SON?
I SUPPOSE...
NONE OF THE PENT-UP TEEN FRUSTRATION THAT ROCK USUALLY SERVES AS AN OUTLET FOR IS EVIDENT IN CHRISTIAN ROCK OR ITS FANS. IN THAT SENSE, THIS MUSIC OFTEN FEELS RATHER SHALLOW AND, WELL, SOULLESS. IT DOESN'T REALLY FEEL LIKE "ROCK" AT ALL, TO BE HONEST.
OF COURSE, THE CHRISTIAN MUSIC "SCENE" DOES OFFER A HEALTHY ALTERNATIVE TO OTHER SEX-AND-DRUG-FUELED SCENES, AND THE LAID-BACK, INDIVIDUALISTIC APPROACH TO CHRISTIANITY THESE ALTERNA-TYPES EXHIBIT MUST HAVE A TREMENDOUS APPEAL TO A LOT OF "SPIRITUALLY SEARCHING" TEENAGERS...
I WAS A CATHOLIC BEFORE I FOUND JESUS.
?!? BUT, AREN'T CATHOLICS—
WHAT, CHRISTIANS? OF COURSE NOT.
YET IN SPITE OF THESE ALTERNA-CHRISTIANS' MORE ENLIGHTENED DEMEANOR, MANY OF THEM STILL ADHERE TO THE SAME RIGID, FUNDAMENTALIST BELIEFS THAT THEIR MORE TRADITIONAL COUNTERPARTS PREACH.
A MUSICIAN FRIEND OF MINE WHO GREW UP IN A FUNDAMENTALIST HOUSEHOLD TOLD ME THAT HE MADE A DELIBERATE EFFORT TO "GET INTO" CHRISTIAN ROCK IN A VAIN ATTEMPT TO RECONCILE HIS LOVE OF ROCK MUSIC WITH HIS PARENTS' FAITH...
I USED TO LISTEN TO BANDS LIKE "PETRA," EVEN THOUGH I HATED THEIR MUSIC!
I WAS JUST TRYING TO BE A "GOOD BOY."
"ARTIFACTS" FROM HIS YOUTH
UP WITH PEOPLE!
REACH OUT!
TO THIS DAY CHRISTIAN ROCK FANS ARRIVE AT CONCERTS BY BUS IN THE COMPANY OF THE YOUTH FELLOWSHIP GROUPS THAT ARE ORGANIZED BY THEIR PARENTS AND MINISTERS. SO MUCH FOR ROCK BEING "ANTI-AUTHORITARIAN" MUSIC!
ANOTHER ODD TWIST IS HOW CCM STARS ARE PUT UNDER ENORMOUS PRESSURE BY THEIR OWN FANS TO SERVE AS ROLE-MODELS BY LIVING AN EXEMPLARY CHRISTIAN LIFESTYLE...
YOU ONLY MENTIONED THE LORD SIX TIMES TONIGHT, MS. GRANT...
?!? WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
DON'T MIND ME. I'M JUST CHECKING YOUR DRINK FOR ALCOHOLIC CONTENT...
A "GOD COUNTER"
A "TASTER"
...YOU'RE GOOD.
TO THEM, A DIVORCE IS STILL CAUSE FOR SCANDAL, AND ANY ATTEMPT AT MAINSTREAM SUCCESS STILL WILL ELICIT HOWLS OF PROTEST FROM THEIR POSSESSIVE FOLLOWING. EVEN MADONNA HAS NEVER HAD TO ENDURE SUCH PUBLIC SCRUTINY!
STILL, WHEN IT COMES TO SANCTIMONY, CHRISTIAN ROCKERS AND THEIR FANS ARE NO WORSE THAN THEIR MAINSTREAM COUNTERPARTS. IT'S PROBABLY JUST ONE MORE THING THEY SWIPED FROM POP MUSIC!
A CONCERT FOR A FREE TIBET
...LET US NOW HAVE A MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR ALL THE TRANSGENDERED PEOPLE OF COLOR WHO PERISHED IN THE PENTAGON ON SEPT. 11th...
END


SLUTS for JESUS
BY P. BAGGE '04 (PETERBAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET)
WHERE'S MY BACK END PARTICIPATION?
I'D LIKE TO DEDICATE MY NEXT SONG TO MY SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST...
THROUGH WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW, AND TO WHOM I OWE ALL OF MY SUCCESS...
...OH YEAH BAYBUH DO ME ALL NIGHT LONG! UNGH! UGH! ♫
...IF DAT BITCH O' YOURS COMES AROUND I'M GONNA MESS 'ER UP GOOD! HOT DAMN! ♫
♪ SHOW ME THE MONEY!
GOOD GOD! ♫
GAY MARRIAGE MAKES A MOCKERY OF ONE OF OUR MOST SACRED INSTITUTIONS...
AS WELL AS OF EVERYTHING OUR JUDEO-CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS HOLD DEAR...
...AND BOTH MY 23-YEAR-OLD THIRD WIFE AND I VOW TO FIGHT THIS ASSAULT ON TRADITIONAL FAMILY VALUES WITH ALL OF OUR MIGHT!
(SPEAKING OF FAMILIES, YOUR EX-WIVES' CHILDREN ARE TRYING TO EXCLUDE ME FROM YOUR WILL AGAIN...)
THE POINT OF MY FILM IS TO GLORIFY THE BEAUTY OF CHRIST'S MESSAGE...
AS WELL AS THE ENORMOUS SACRIFICES HE MADE ON OUR BEHALF...
—HEY, CAN WE GET A LITTLE MORE PUS OOZING OUT OF THESE WOUNDS?
AND WHAT DO THE GOSPELS SAY ABOUT PROTRUDING EYEBALLS?
CAN I TAKE A COFFEE BREAK?

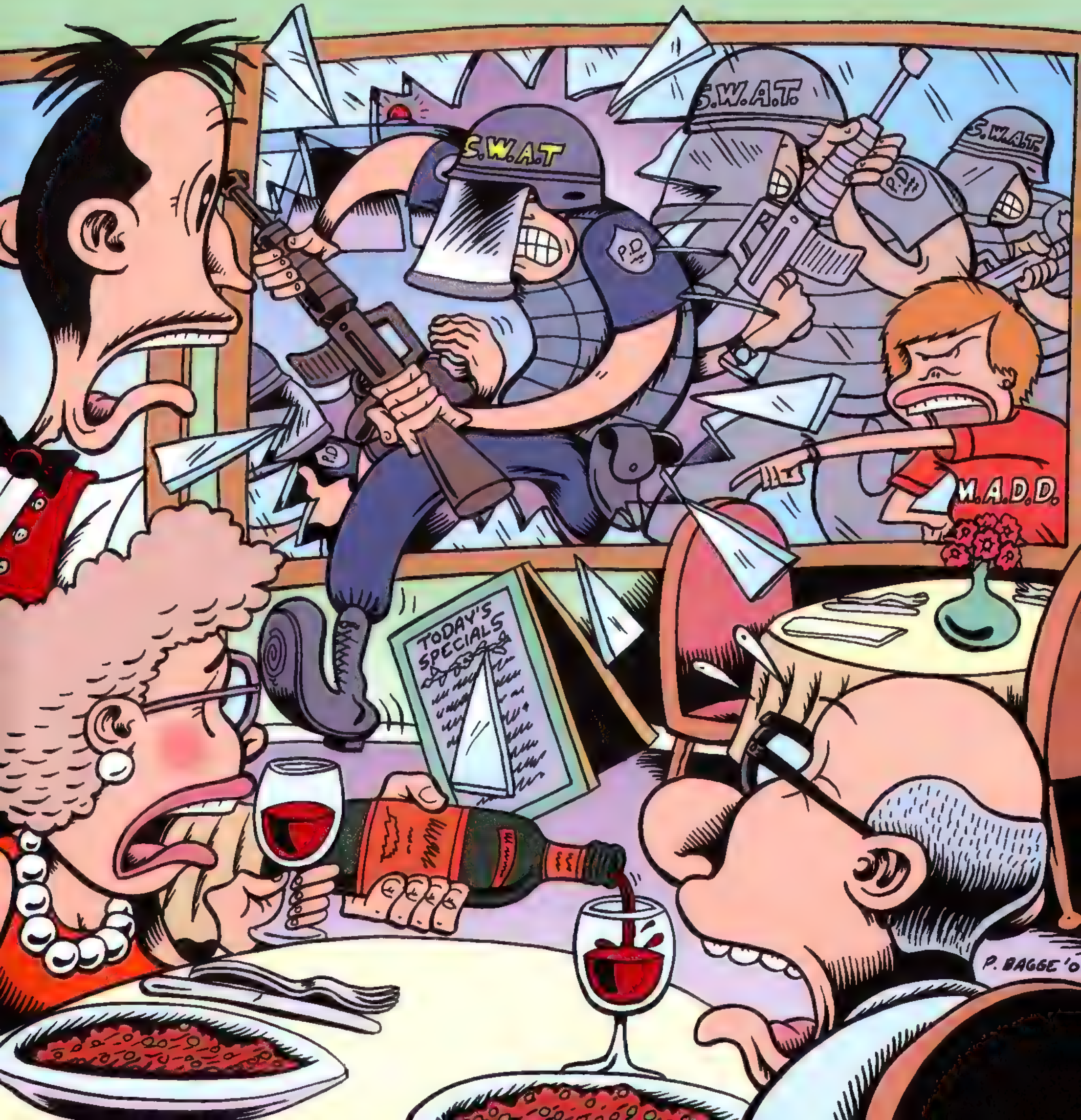
THE LiFE CYCLE OF A HACK

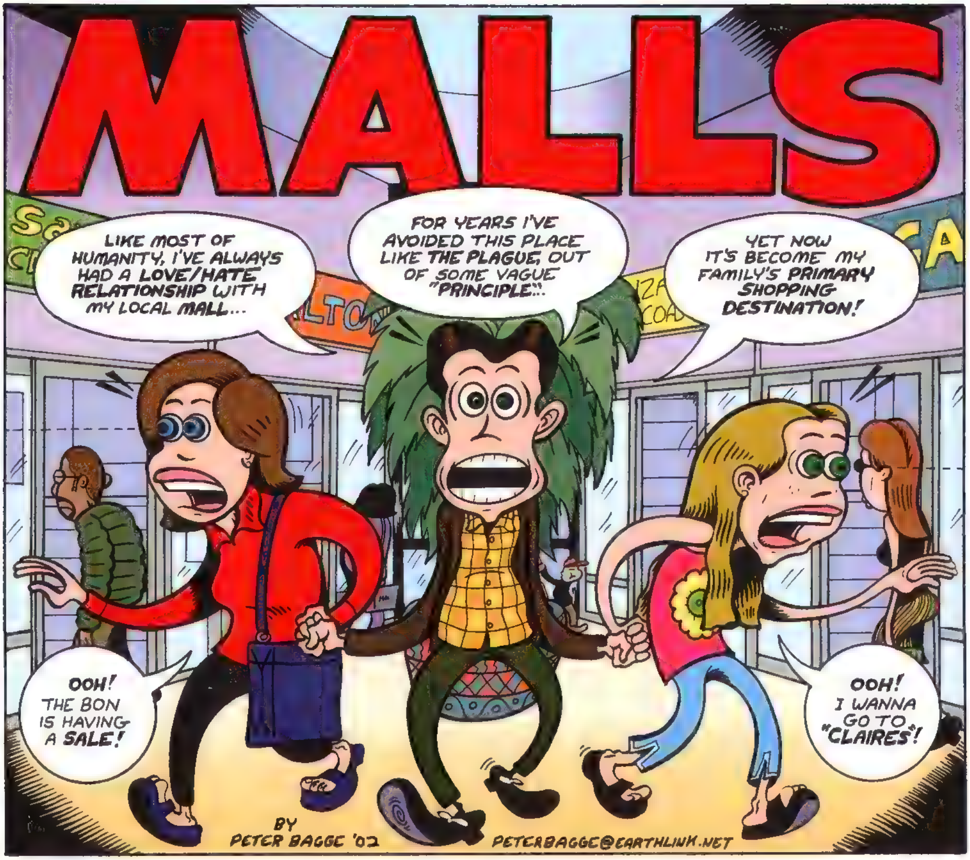
(PETERBAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET)



STUPID

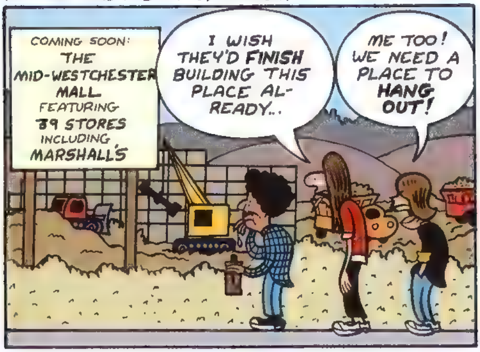
BUSINESS

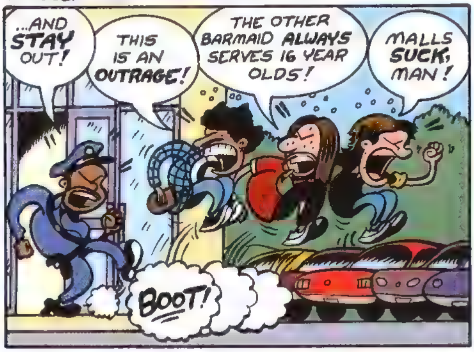

S.W.A.T
S.W.A.T.
S.W.A.T.
P.D.
M.A.D.D.
TODAY'S SPECIALS
P. BAGGE '0

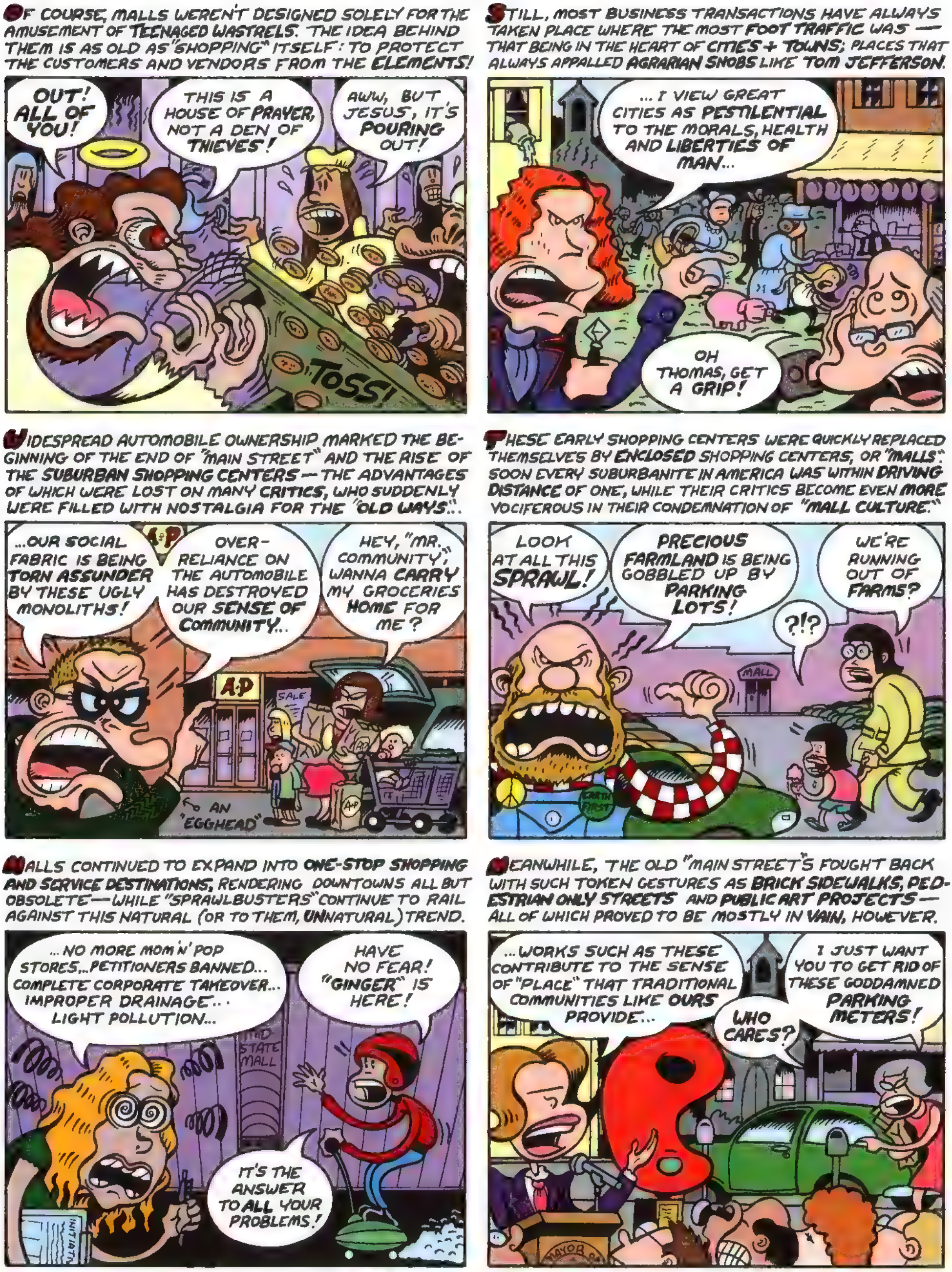


THE CONCEPT OF A "MALL" HELD **GREAT PROMISE** TO ME AND **MY** FELLOW TEENS BACK IN THE EARLY '70S. WE ENVISIONED IT AS A PLACE BURSTING WITH "MALL BABES" AND **PART-TIME JOB OPPORTUNITIES**, ALL AT OUR DISPOSAL.

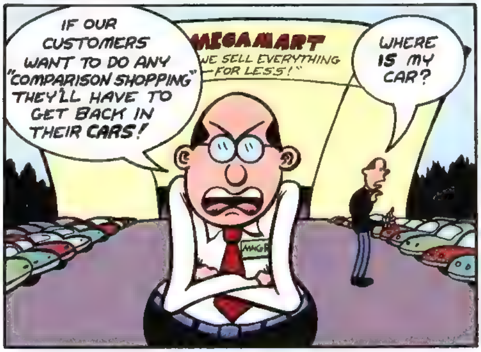
IT WOUND UP OFFERING US NEITHER (THOUGH OUR **LOITERING, SHOPLIFTING** AND **PUBLIC-INTOXICATION HABITS** MAY HAVE HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH IT). THUS, THE SEEDS OF **RESENTMENT** HAD BEEN SOWN!



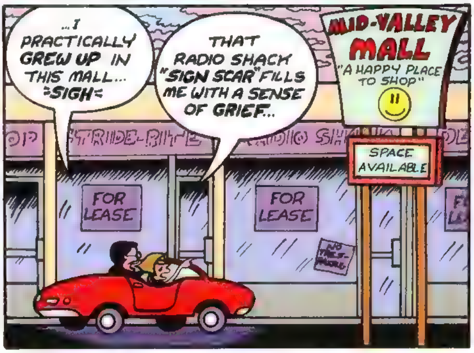



OF COURSE, MALLS WEREN'T DESIGNED SOLELY FOR THE AMUSEMENT OF TEENAGED WASTRELS. THE IDEA BEHIND THEM IS AS OLD AS "SHOPPING" ITSELF: TO PROTECT THE CUSTOMERS AND VENDORS FROM THE ELEMENTS!
OUT! ALL OF YOU!
THIS IS A HOUSE OF PRAYER, NOT A DEN OF THIEVES!
AWW, BUT JESUS, IT'S POURING OUT!
TOSS!
STILL, MOST BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS HAVE ALWAYS TAKEN PLACE WHERE THE MOST FOOT TRAFFIC WAS — THAT BEING IN THE HEART OF CITIES + TOWNS; PLACES THAT ALWAYS APPALLED AGRARIAN SNOBS LIKE TOM JEFFERSON.
...I VIEW GREAT CITIES AS PESTILENTIAL TO THE MORALS, HEALTH AND LIBERTIES OF MAN...
OH THOMAS, GET A GRIP!
WIDESPREAD AUTOMOBILE OWNERSHIP MARKED THE BEGINNING OF THE END OF "MAIN STREET" AND THE RISE OF THE SUBURBAN SHOPPING CENTERS — THE ADVANTAGES OF WHICH WERE LOST ON MANY CRITICS, WHO SUDDENLY WERE FILLED WITH NOSTALGIA FOR THE "OLD WAYS"...
...OUR SOCIAL FABRIC IS BEING TORN ASSUNDER BY THESE UGLY MONOLITHS!
OVER-RELIANCE ON THE AUTOMOBILE HAS DESTROYED OUR SENSE OF COMMUNITY...
HEY, "MR. COMMUNITY", WANNA CARRY MY GROCERIES HOME FOR ME?
A&P
SALE
AN "EGGHEAD"
THESE EARLY SHOPPING CENTERS WERE QUICKLY REPLACED THEMSELVES BY ENCLOSED SHOPPING CENTERS, OR "MALLS". SOON EVERY SUBURBANITE IN AMERICA WAS WITHIN DRIVING DISTANCE OF ONE, WHILE THEIR CRITICS BECOME EVEN MORE VOCIFEROUS IN THEIR CONDEMNATION OF "MALL CULTURE."
LOOK AT ALL THIS SPRAWL!
PRECIOUS FARMLAND IS BEING GOBBLED UP BY PARKING LOTS!
WE'RE RUNNING OUT OF FARMS?
?!?
MALL
EARTH FIRST
MALLS CONTINUED TO EXPAND INTO ONE-STOP SHOPPING AND SERVICE DESTINATIONS, RENDERING DOWNTOWNS ALL BUT OBSOLETE — WHILE "SPRAWLBUSTERS" CONTINUE TO RAIL AGAINST THIS NATURAL (OR TO THEM, UNNATURAL) TREND.
...NO MORE MOM 'N' POP STORES... PETITIONERS BANNED... COMPLETE CORPORATE TAKEOVER... IMPROPER DRAINAGE... LIGHT POLLUTION...
HAVE NO FEAR! "GINGER" IS HERE!
MID-STATE MALL
IT'S THE ANSWER TO ALL YOUR PROBLEMS!
MEANWHILE, THE OLD "MAIN STREETS" FOUGHT BACK WITH SUCH TOKEN GESTURES AS BRICK SIDEWALKS, PEDESTRIAN ONLY STREETS AND PUBLIC ART PROJECTS — ALL OF WHICH PROVED TO BE MOSTLY IN VAIN, HOWEVER.
...WORKS SUCH AS THESE CONTRIBUTE TO THE SENSE OF "PLACE" THAT TRADITIONAL COMMUNITIES LIKE OURS PROVIDE...
WHO CARES?
I JUST WANT YOU TO GET RID OF THESE GODDAMNED PARKING METERS!

MALLS FINALLY MET THEIR MATCH IN THE FORM OF GIANT DISCOUNT "BIG BOX" STORES LIKE **WAL-MART** AND **COSTCO**, WHO WISELY REFUSE TO SHARE REAL ESTATE OR PARKING SPACE WITH ANY POTENTIAL **COMPETITION**.

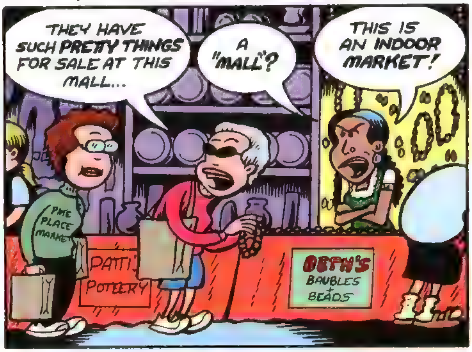


THESE MEGASTORES HAVE PUT MANY **DEPARTMENT STORE CHAINS** OUT OF BUSINESS, AND THE LOSS OF THEIR "ANCHOR STORES" HAS LED TO A PROLIFERATION OF **"DEAD MALLS"** —YET EVEN **THOSE** HAVE THEIR NOSTALGIC DEFENDERS!



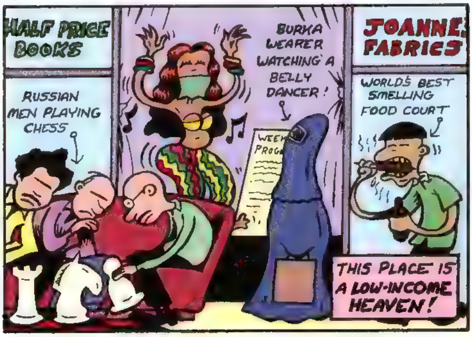
ONE RESPONSE TO THIS THREAT HAS BEEN TO TURN MALLS INTO **VACATION DESTINATIONS** — SUCH AS THE "MALL OF AMERICA," WHICH FEATURES RIDES, NIGHTCLUBS AND **GUIDED TOURS** TO GO ALONG WITH ITS 400-PLUS SHOPS!

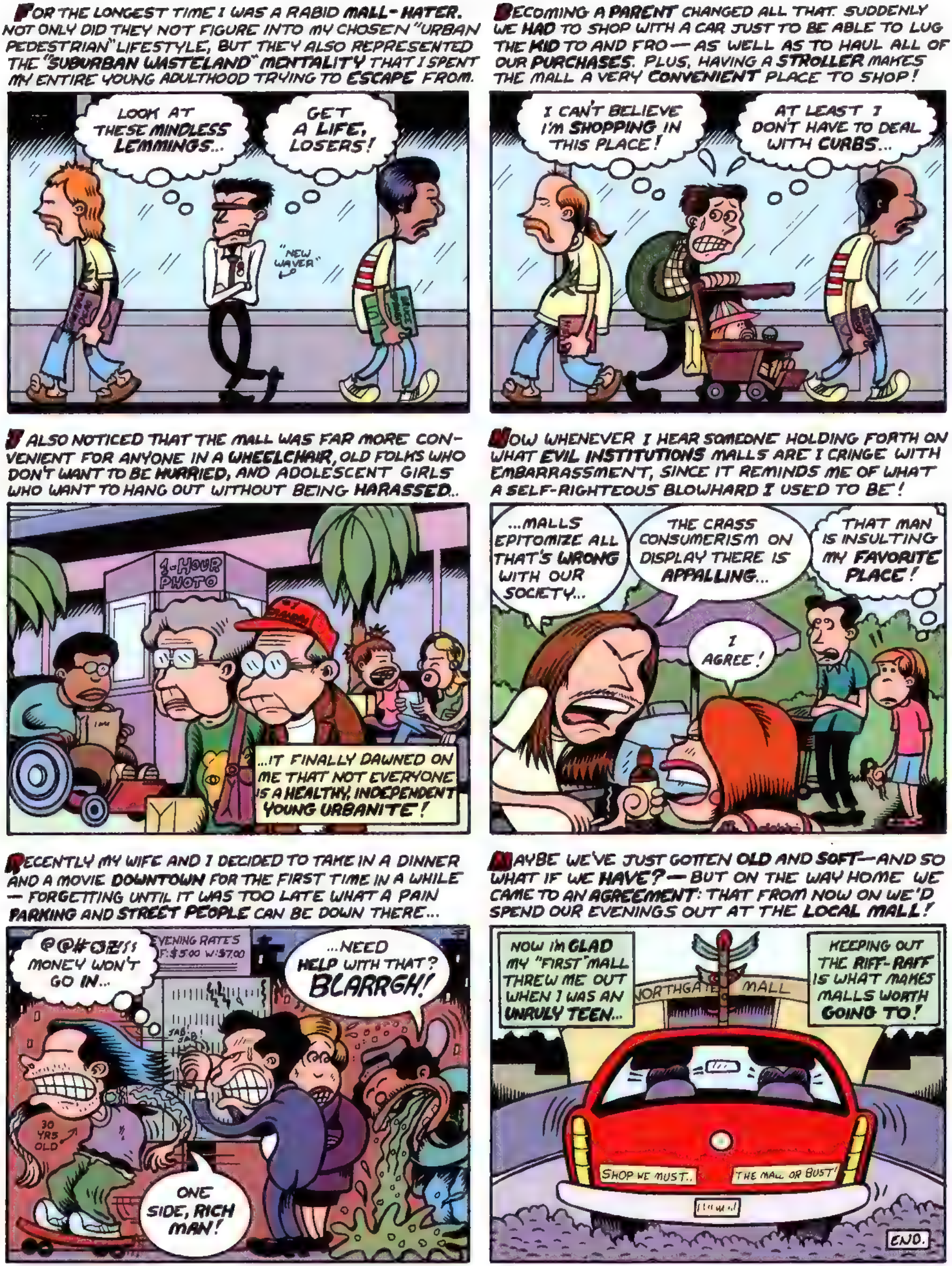
DOWNTOWNS ALSO CONTINUE TO FIGHT BACK BY **"MALL-IFYING"** THEIR SHOPPING DISTRICTS — AS WELL AS REVIVING AND EXPANDING THEIR OLD "FARMER'S MARKETS," WHICH ALSO DOUBLE AS **TOURIST TRAPS**!



THE WORKING-CLASS APPEAL OF THE MEGASTORES HAVE INSPIRED SOME MALLS TO "UPSCALE" IN ORDER TO ATTRACT **MORE AFFLUENT CUSTOMERS** — WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY **ALIENATING** SHOPPERS WHO DON'T FIT IN WITH THEIR NEW "IMAGE"...

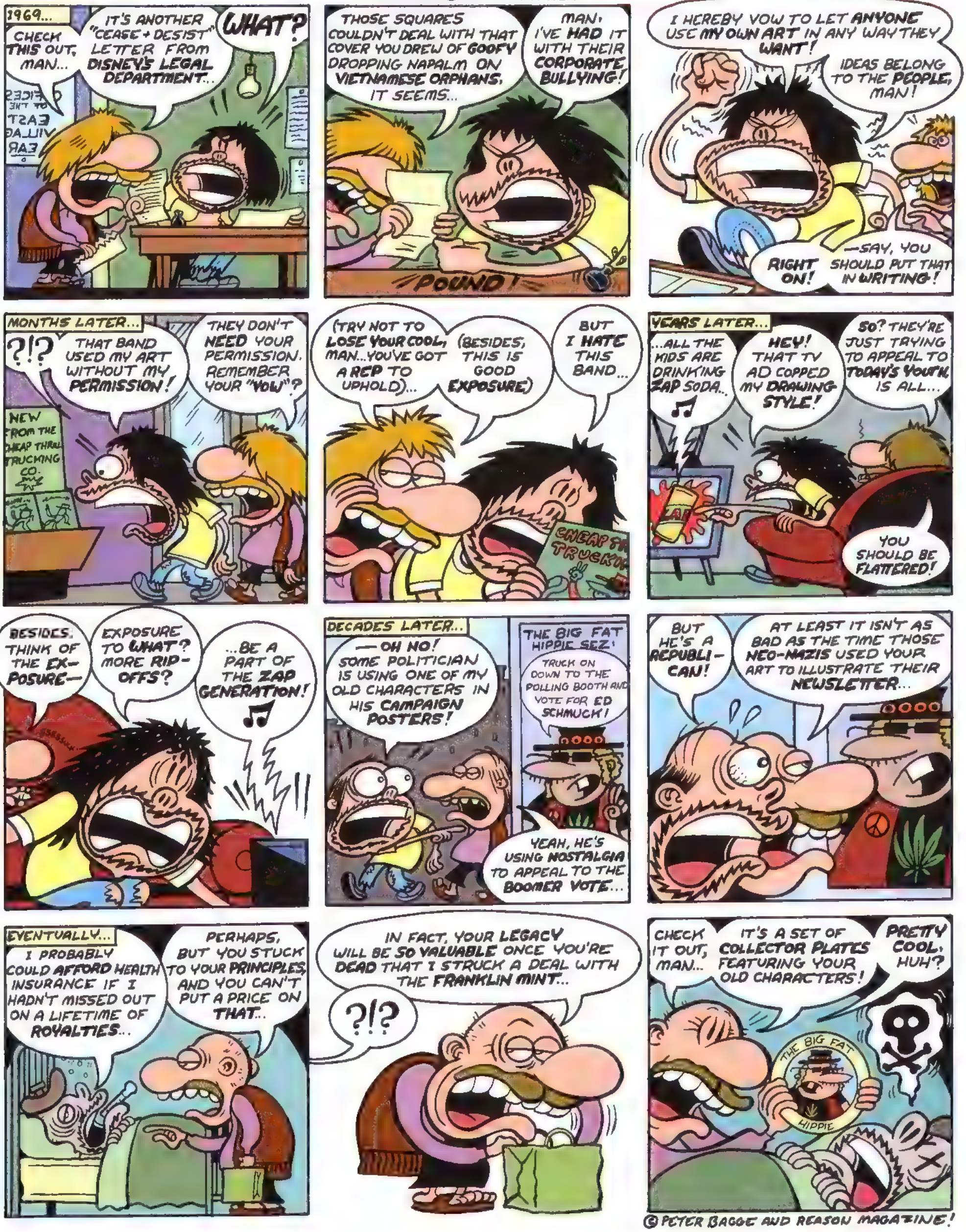
ONE UNIQUE RESPONSE IS THE **CROSSROADS MALL** IN SUBURBAN SEATTLE — A FORMER "DEAD MALL" THAT NOW SERVES AS A BUSTLING **COMMUNITY CENTER** FOR ITS MIXED IMMIGRANT NEIGHBORHOOD, COMPLETE WITH A LIBRARY AND EVEN ITS OWN **POLICE STATION**...




FOR THE LONGEST TIME I WAS A RABID MALL-HATER. NOT ONLY DID THEY NOT FIGURE INTO MY CHOSEN "URBAN PEDESTRIAN" LIFESTYLE, BUT THEY ALSO REPRESENTED THE "SUBURBAN WASTELAND" MENTALITY THAT I SPENT MY ENTIRE YOUNG ADULTHOOD TRYING TO ESCAPE FROM.
LOOK AT THESE MINDLESS LEMMINGS...
GET A LIFE, LOSERS!
"NEW WAVER"
BECOMING A PARENT CHANGED ALL THAT. SUDDENLY WE HAD TO SHOP WITH A CAR JUST TO BE ABLE TO LUG THE KID TO AND FRO — AS WELL AS TO HAUL ALL OF OUR PURCHASES. PLUS, HAVING A STROLLER MAKES THE MALL A VERY CONVENIENT PLACE TO SHOP!
I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M SHOPPING IN THIS PLACE!
AT LEAST I DON'T HAVE TO DEAL WITH CURBS...
I ALSO NOTICED THAT THE MALL WAS FAR MORE CONVENIENT FOR ANYONE IN A WHEELCHAIR, OLD FOLKS WHO DON'T WANT TO BE HURRIED, AND ADOLESCENT GIRLS WHO WANT TO HANG OUT WITHOUT BEING HARASSED...
1-HOUR PHOTO
...IT FINALLY DAWNED ON ME THAT NOT EVERYONE IS A HEALTHY, INDEPENDENT YOUNG URBANITE!
NOW WHENEVER I HEAR SOMEONE HOLDING FORTH ON WHAT EVIL INSTITUTIONS MALLS ARE I CRINGE WITH EMBARRASSMENT, SINCE IT REMINDS ME OF WHAT A SELF-RIGHTEOUS BLOWHARD I USED TO BE!
...MALLS EPITOMIZE ALL THAT'S WRONG WITH OUR SOCIETY...
THE CRASS CONSUMERISM ON DISPLAY THERE IS APPALLING...
THAT MAN IS INSULTING MY FAVORITE PLACE!
I AGREE!
RECENTLY MY WIFE AND I DECIDED TO TAKE IN A DINNER AND A MOVIE DOWNTOWN FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A WHILE — FORGETTING UNTIL IT WAS TOO LATE WHAT A PAIN PARKING AND STREET PEOPLE CAN BE DOWN THERE...
@@#☉Z!! MONEY WON'T GO IN...
EVENING RATES F:$5.00 W:$7.00
...NEED HELP WITH THAT? BLARRGH!
JAB JAB
30 YRS OLD
ONE SIDE, RICH MAN!
MAYBE WE'VE JUST GOTTEN OLD AND SOFT — AND SO WHAT IF WE HAVE? — BUT ON THE WAY HOME WE CAME TO AN AGREEMENT: THAT FROM NOW ON WE'D SPEND OUR EVENINGS OUT AT THE LOCAL MALL!
NOW I'M GLAD MY "FIRST" MALL THREW ME OUT WHEN I WAS AN UNRULY TEEN...
NORTHGATE MALL
KEEPING OUT THE RIFF-RAFF IS WHAT MAKES MALLS WORTH GOING TO!
SHOP WE MUST.
THE MALL OR BUST!
END.

JUST SAY NO TO INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY!

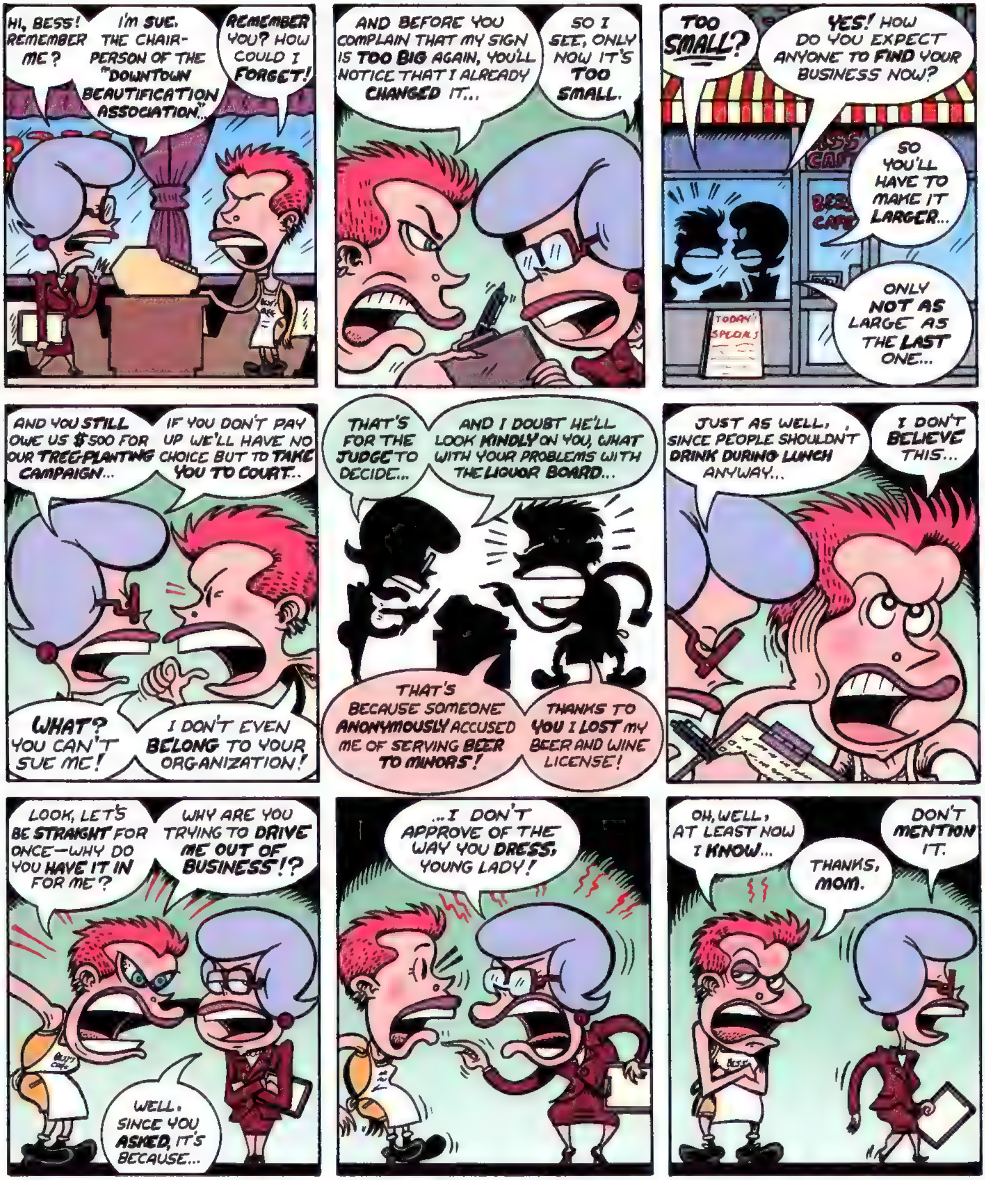
PETERBAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET

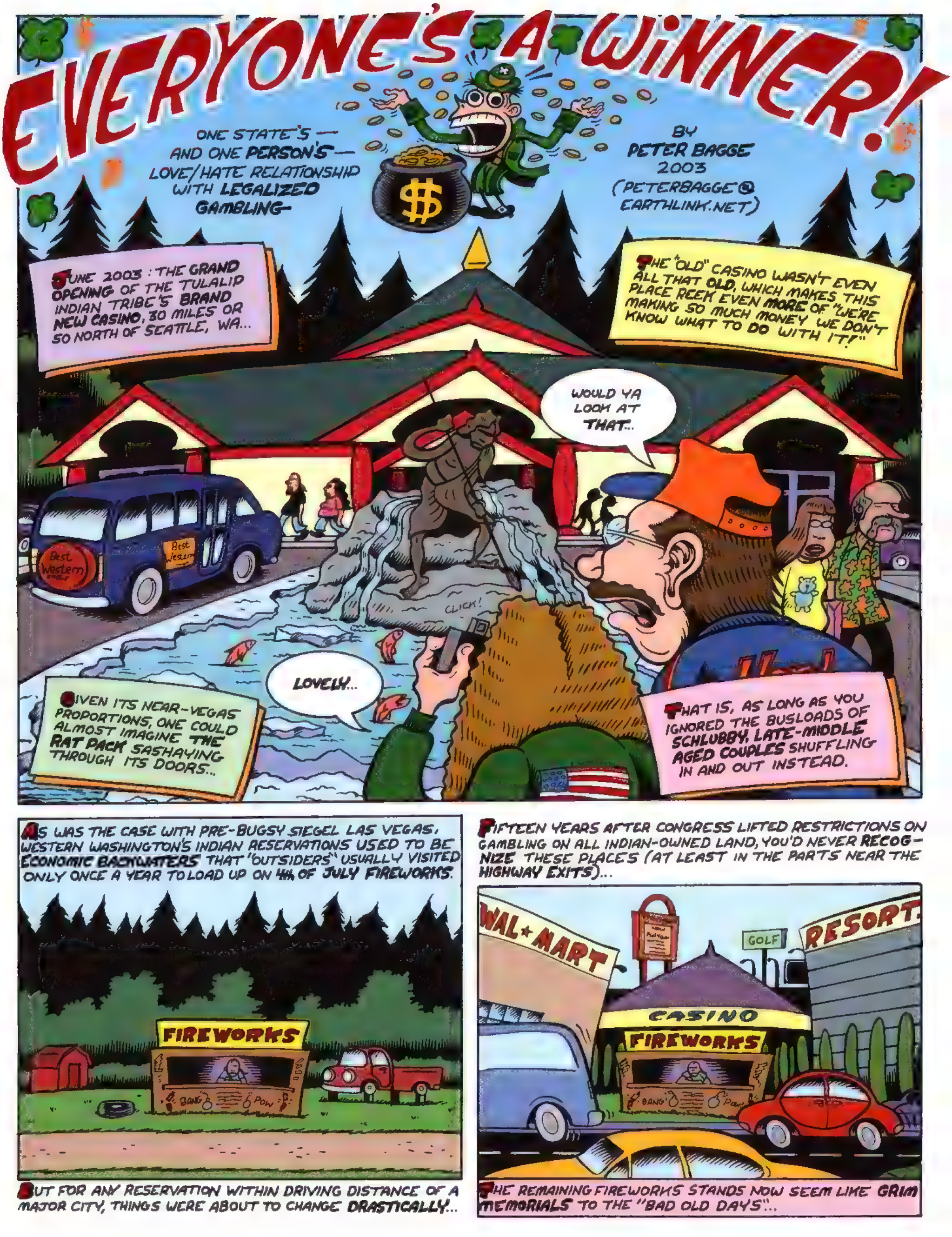


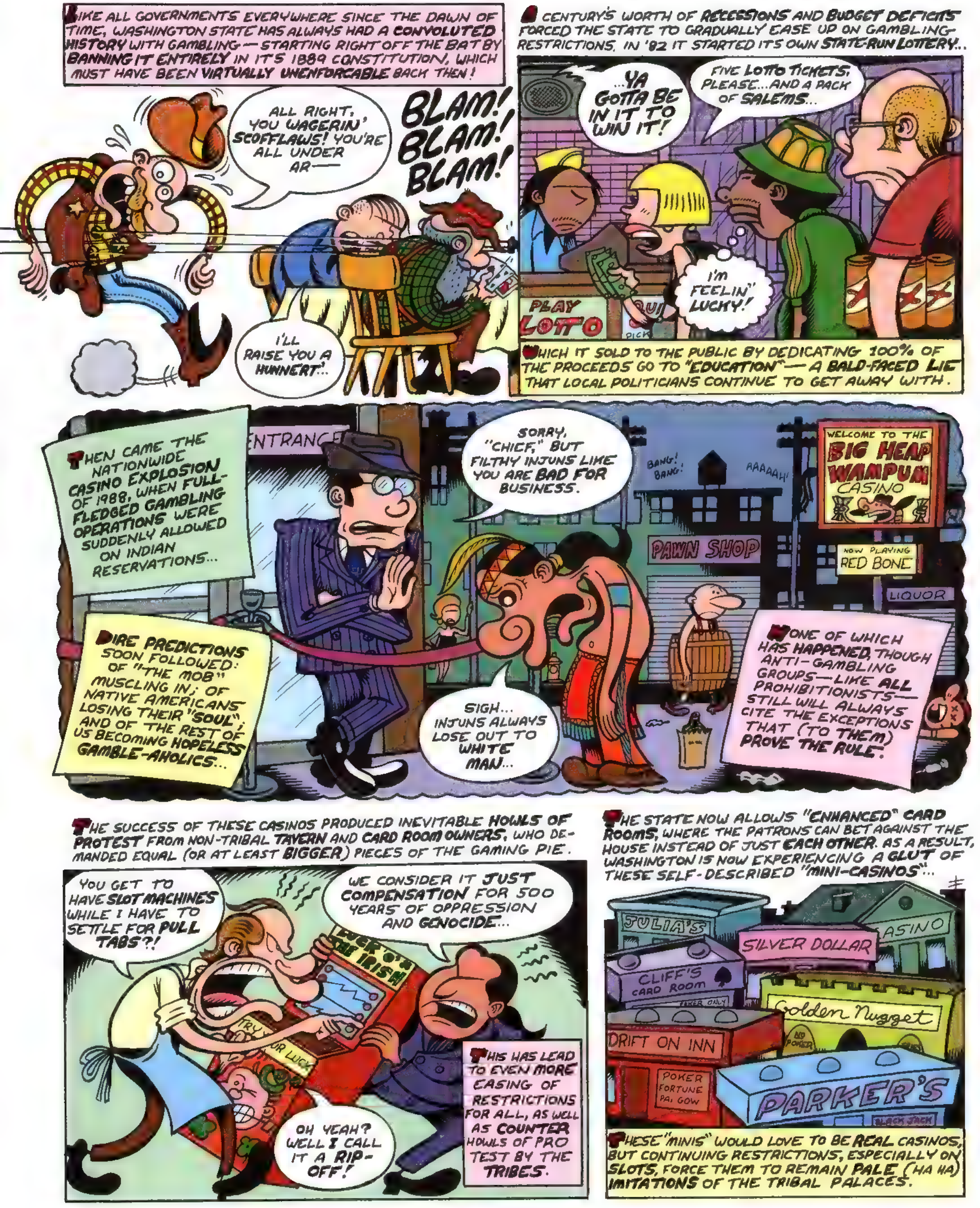
© PETER BAGGE AND REASON MAGAZINE!

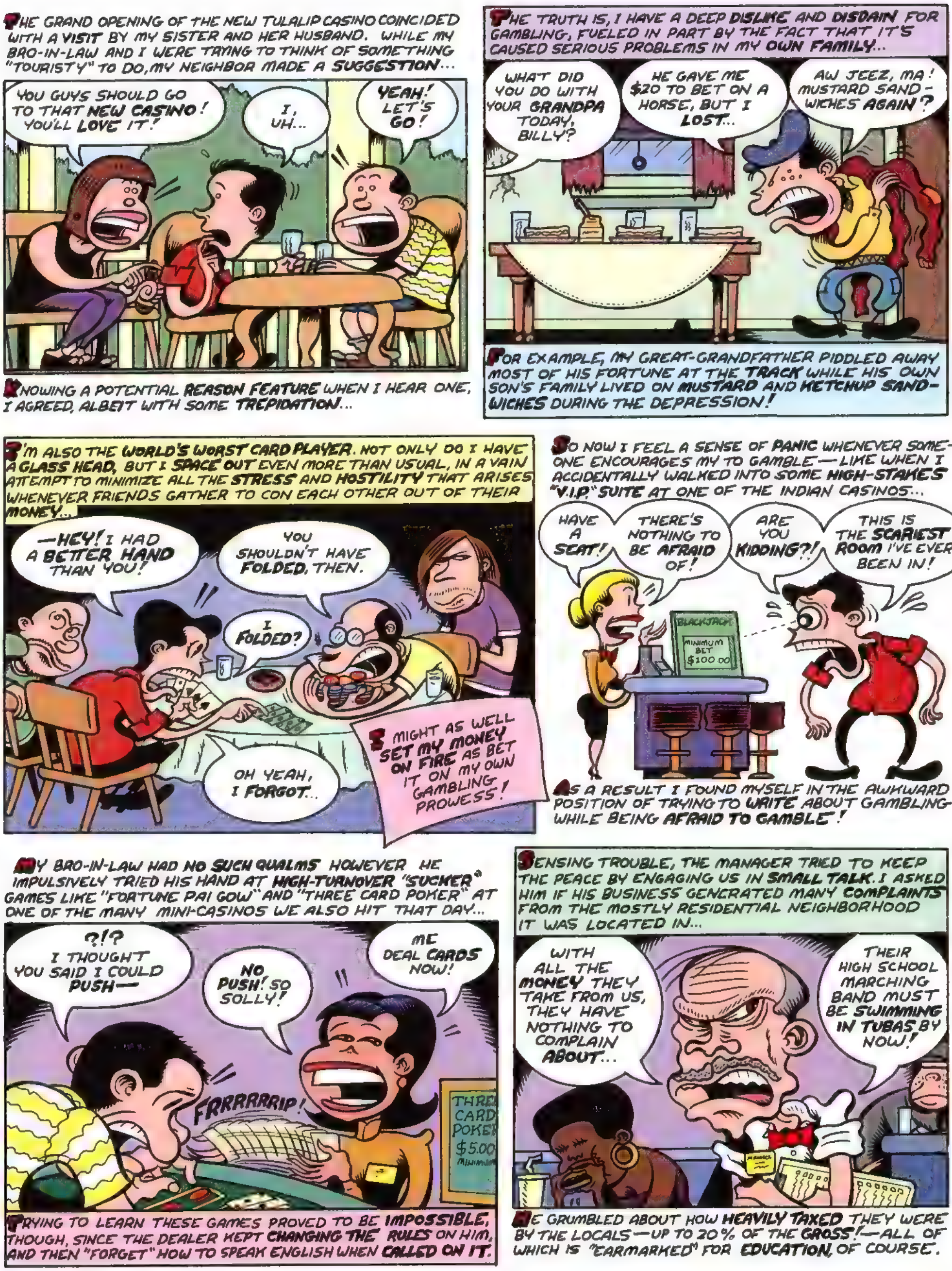
"Your Friendly Neighborhood Tyrant"

©2002 by P. BAGGE (PETERBAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET)




EVERYONE'S A WINNER!
ONE STATE'S — AND ONE PERSON'S — LOVE/HATE RELATIONSHIP WITH LEGALIZED GAMBLING-
BY PETER BAGGE 2003 (PETERBAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET)
$
JUNE 2003 : THE GRAND OPENING OF THE TULALIP INDIAN TRIBE'S BRAND NEW CASINO, 30 MILES OR SO NORTH OF SEATTLE, WA...
THE "OLD" CASINO WASN'T EVEN ALL THAT OLD, WHICH MAKES THIS PLACE REEK EVEN MORE OF "WE'RE MAKING SO MUCH MONEY WE DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH IT!"
Best Western
WOULD YA LOOK AT THAT...
CLICK!
LOVELY...
GIVEN ITS NEAR-VEGAS PROPORTIONS, ONE COULD ALMOST IMAGINE THE RAT PACK SASHAYING THROUGH ITS DOORS...
THAT IS, AS LONG AS YOU IGNORED THE BUSLOADS OF SCHLUBBY, LATE-MIDDLE AGED COUPLES SHUFFLING IN AND OUT INSTEAD.
AS WAS THE CASE WITH PRE-BUGSY SIEGEL LAS VEGAS, WESTERN WASHINGTON'S INDIAN RESERVATIONS USED TO BE ECONOMIC BACKWATERS THAT "OUTSIDERS" USUALLY VISITED ONLY ONCE A YEAR TO LOAD UP ON 4th OF JULY FIREWORKS.
FIREWORKS
BANG
POW
BUT FOR ANY RESERVATION WITHIN DRIVING DISTANCE OF A MAJOR CITY, THINGS WERE ABOUT TO CHANGE DRASTICALLY...
FIFTEEN YEARS AFTER CONGRESS LIFTED RESTRICTIONS ON GAMBLING ON ALL INDIAN-OWNED LAND, YOU'D NEVER RECOGNIZE THESE PLACES (AT LEAST IN THE PARTS NEAR THE HIGHWAY EXITS)...
WAL★MART
GOLF
RESORT
CASINO
FIREWORKS
BANG
POW
THE REMAINING FIREWORKS STANDS NOW SEEM LIKE GRIM MEMORIALS TO THE "BAD OLD DAYS"...


LIKE ALL GOVERNMENTS EVERYWHERE SINCE THE DAWN OF TIME, WASHINGTON STATE HAS ALWAYS HAD A CONVOLUTED HISTORY WITH GAMBLING — STARTING RIGHT OFF THE BAT BY BANNING IT ENTIRELY IN IT'S 1889 CONSTITUTION, WHICH MUST HAVE BEEN VIRTUALLY UNENFORCABLE BACK THEN!
ALL RIGHT, YOU WAGERIN' SCOFFLAWS! YOU'RE ALL UNDER AR—
BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!
I'LL RAISE YOU A HUNNERT...
A CENTURY'S WORTH OF RECESSIONS AND BUDGET DEFICITS FORCED THE STATE TO GRADUALLY EASE UP ON GAMBLING RESTRICTIONS. IN '82 IT STARTED ITS OWN STATE-RUN LOTTERY...
...YA GOTTA BE IN IT TO WIN IT!
FIVE LOTTO TICKETS, PLEASE...AND A PACK OF SALEMS...
I'M FEELIN' LUCKY!
PLAY LOTTO
WHICH IT SOLD TO THE PUBLIC BY DEDICATING 100% OF THE PROCEEDS GO TO "EDUCATION" — A BALD-FACED LIE THAT LOCAL POLITICIANS CONTINUE TO GET AWAY WITH.
THEN CAME THE NATIONWIDE CASINO EXPLOSION OF 1988, WHEN FULL-FLEDGED GAMBLING OPERATIONS WERE SUDDENLY ALLOWED ON INDIAN RESERVATIONS...
ENTRANCE
SORRY, "CHIEF," BUT FILTHY INJUNS LIKE YOU ARE BAD FOR BUSINESS.
BANG! BANG!
AAAAAAH!
WELCOME TO THE BIG HEAP WAMPUM CASINO
PAWN SHOP
NOW PLAYING RED BONE
LIQUOR
DIRE PREDICTIONS SOON FOLLOWED: OF "THE MOB" MUSCLING IN; OF NATIVE AMERICANS LOSING THEIR "SOUL"; AND OF THE REST OF US BECOMING HOPELESS GAMBLE-AHOLICS...
SIGH... INJUNS ALWAYS LOSE OUT TO WHITE MAN...
NONE OF WHICH HAS HAPPENED, THOUGH ANTI-GAMBLING GROUPS — LIKE ALL PROHIBITIONISTS — STILL WILL ALWAYS CITE THE EXCEPTIONS THAT (TO THEM) PROVE THE RULE.
THE SUCCESS OF THESE CASINOS PRODUCED INEVITABLE HOWLS OF PROTEST FROM NON-TRIBAL TAVERN AND CARD ROOM OWNERS, WHO DEMANDED EQUAL (OR AT LEAST BIGGER) PIECES OF THE GAMING PIE.
YOU GET TO HAVE SLOT MACHINES WHILE I HAVE TO SETTLE FOR PULL TABS?!
WE CONSIDER IT JUST COMPENSATION FOR 500 YEARS OF OPPRESSION AND GENOCIDE...
LUCK O' THE IRISH
TRY YOUR LUCK
OH YEAH? WELL I CALL IT A RIP-OFF!
THIS HAS LEAD TO EVEN MORE EASING OF RESTRICTIONS FOR ALL, AS WELL AS COUNTER HOWLS OF PROTEST BY THE TRIBES.
THE STATE NOW ALLOWS "ENHANCED" CARD ROOMS, WHERE THE PATRONS CAN BET AGAINST THE HOUSE INSTEAD OF JUST EACH OTHER. AS A RESULT, WASHINGTON IS NOW EXPERIENCING A GLUT OF THESE SELF-DESCRIBED "MINI-CASINOS"...
JULIA'S
CASINO
SILVER DOLLAR
CLIFF'S CARD ROOM
POKER ONLY
Golden Nugget
DRIFT ON INN
POKER FORTUNE PAI GOW
PARKER'S
BLACK JACK
THESE "MINIS" WOULD LOVE TO BE REAL CASINOS, BUT CONTINUING RESTRICTIONS, ESPECIALLY ON SLOTS, FORCE THEM TO REMAIN PALE (HA HA) IMITATIONS OF THE TRIBAL PALACES.


THE GRAND OPENING OF THE NEW TULALIP CASINO COINCIDED WITH A VISIT BY MY SISTER AND HER HUSBAND. WHILE MY BRO-IN-LAW AND I WERE TRYING TO THINK OF SOMETHING "TOURISTY" TO DO, MY NEIGHBOR MADE A SUGGESTION...
YOU GUYS SHOULD GO TO THAT NEW CASINO! YOU'LL LOVE IT!
I, UH...
YEAH! LET'S GO!
KNOWING A POTENTIAL REASON FEATURE WHEN I HEAR ONE, I AGREED, ALBEIT WITH SOME TREPIDATION...
THE TRUTH IS, I HAVE A DEEP DISLIKE AND DISDAIN FOR GAMBLING, FUELED IN PART BY THE FACT THAT IT'S CAUSED SERIOUS PROBLEMS IN MY OWN FAMILY...
WHAT DID YOU DO WITH YOUR GRANDPA TODAY, BILLY?
HE GAVE ME $20 TO BET ON A HORSE, BUT I LOST...
AW JEEZ, MA! MUSTARD SAND-WICHES AGAIN?
FOR EXAMPLE, MY GREAT-GRANDFATHER PIDDLED AWAY MOST OF HIS FORTUNE AT THE TRACK WHILE HIS OWN SON'S FAMILY LIVED ON MUSTARD AND KETCHUP SAND-WICHES DURING THE DEPRESSION!
I'M ALSO THE WORLD'S WORST CARD PLAYER. NOT ONLY DO I HAVE A GLASS HEAD, BUT I SPACE OUT EVEN MORE THAN USUAL, IN A VAIN ATTEMPT TO MINIMIZE ALL THE STRESS AND HOSTILITY THAT ARISES WHENEVER FRIENDS GATHER TO CON EACH OTHER OUT OF THEIR MONEY...
—HEY! I HAD A BETTER HAND THAN YOU!
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE FOLDED, THEN.
I FOLDED?
OH YEAH, I FORGOT...
I MIGHT AS WELL SET MY MONEY ON FIRE AS BET IT ON MY OWN GAMBLING PROWESS!
SO NOW I FEEL A SENSE OF PANIC WHENEVER SOME-ONE ENCOURAGES MY TO GAMBLE — LIKE WHEN I ACCIDENTALLY WALKED INTO SOME HIGH-STAKES "V.I.P." SUITE AT ONE OF THE INDIAN CASINOS...
HAVE A SEAT!
THERE'S NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF!
ARE YOU KIDDING?!
THIS IS THE SCARIEST ROOM I'VE EVER BEEN IN!
BLACKJACK
MINIMUM BET $100.00
AS A RESULT I FOUND MYSELF IN THE AWKWARD POSITION OF TRYING TO WRITE ABOUT GAMBLING WHILE BEING AFRAID TO GAMBLE!
MY BRO-IN-LAW HAD NO SUCH QUALMS HOWEVER. HE IMPULSIVELY TRIED HIS HAND AT HIGH-TURNOVER "SUCKER" GAMES LIKE "FORTUNE PAI GOW" AND "THREE CARD POKER" AT ONE OF THE MANY MINI-CASINOS WE ALSO HIT THAT DAY...
?!? I THOUGHT YOU SAID I COULD PUSH—
NO PUSH! SO SOLLY!
ME DEAL CARDS NOW!
FRRRRRRIP!
THREE CARD POKER $5.00 MINIMUM
TRYING TO LEARN THESE GAMES PROVED TO BE IMPOSSIBLE, THOUGH, SINCE THE DEALER KEPT CHANGING THE RULES ON HIM, AND THEN "FORGET" HOW TO SPEAK ENGLISH WHEN CALLED ON IT.
SENSING TROUBLE, THE MANAGER TRIED TO KEEP THE PEACE BY ENGAGING US IN SMALL TALK. I ASKED HIM IF HIS BUSINESS GENERATED MANY COMPLAINTS FROM THE MOSTLY RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD IT WAS LOCATED IN...
WITH ALL THE MONEY THEY TAKE FROM US, THEY HAVE NOTHING TO COMPLAIN ABOUT...
THEIR HIGH SCHOOL MARCHING BAND MUST BE SWIMMING IN TUBAS BY NOW!
HE GRUMBLED ABOUT HOW HEAVILY TAXED THEY WERE BY THE LOCALS — UP TO 20% OF THE GROSS! — ALL OF WHICH IS "EARMARKED" FOR EDUCATION, OF COURSE.

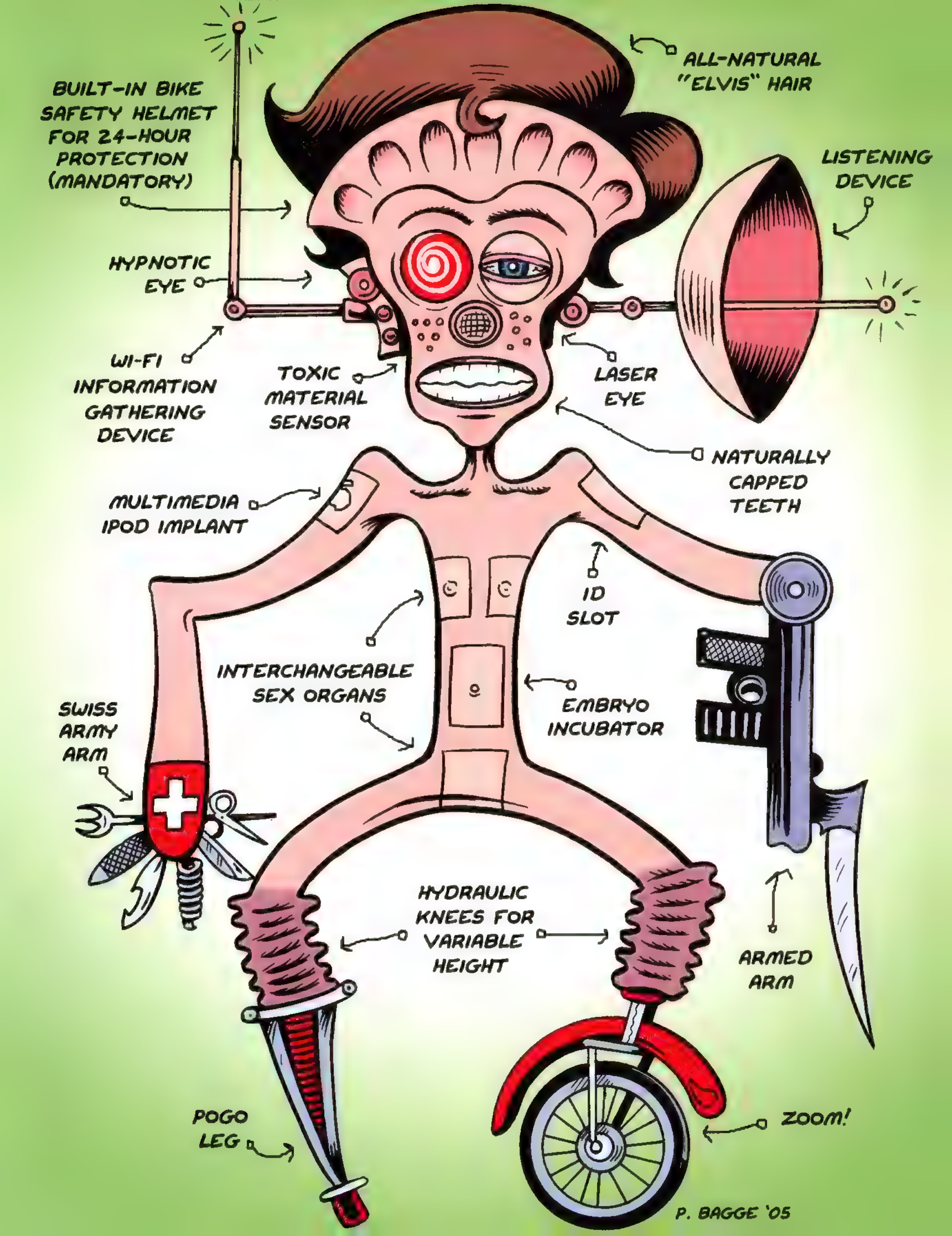
AS FOR THAT SLICK NEW INDIAN CASINO... I DUNNO... ITS NEWNESS ALONE MAKES IT FEEL AWFULLY STERILE, IN SPITE OF ITS SHABBY PATRONS...
POT 'O GOLD
PLEASE, JESUS...
...@#O's PLACE HAS ALL MY MONEY...
GAMBLE, GAMBLE, GAMBLE, EAT, SLEEP, GAMBLE, GAMBLE...
CASINOS MAKE FOR GREAT PEOPLE WATCHING, THOUGH THESE "TORNADO TARGETS" ARE HARDLY THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE. AS MY FRIEND'S GRANDMA USED TO SAY, THESE FOLKS "LOOK LIKE PEARL HARBOR—ALL SHOT TO HELL!"
TAKE EXHIBIT A, "MR. SLOTS." AT SOME POINT HE HIT ON SOME PATTERN THAT BRIEFLY PAID OFF FOR HIM, AND NOW HE'S GONNA STICK WITH IT UNTIL HIS FINGER FALLS OFF...
...PLAY TWO LINES, PLAY THREE LINES... PLAY TWO, PLAY THREE...
FILTHY RICH
AND HIS "RELAXED" POSE PERFECTLY ILLUSTRATES THE MASTURBATORY NATURE OF VIDEO SLOT PLAYING...
WAITRESS! GET THIS "PREFERRED CUSTOMER" ANOTHER DRINK!
THEN THERE'S THE GENIUS ODDSMAKER AT THE ROULETTE TABLE, CAREFULLY DISTRIBUTING AN ENTIRE PAYCHECK'S WORTH OF CHIPS ALL OVER THE BOARD—4 CHIPS HERE, 6 CHIPS THERE, AS IF IT MAKES ANY DIFFERENCE—THUS INSURING THAT HE'LL BE ROUGHLY BREAKING EVEN ALL DAY...
LET'S SEE... I'LL PUT FOUR CHIPS ON 23... NO, MAKE THAT FIVE...
TRUST ME, THERE'S A METHOD TO MY MADNESS...
HOLD ON, I'M ALMOST READY...
MEANWHILE, OUTSIDE THE SUN IS SHINING AND THE BIRDS ARE SINGING...
ALSO ON DISPLAY ARE A LOT OF EXTREME, UNSAVORY TYPES, THE MOST DISTRESSING OF WHICH ARE THE ADRENALINE-FUELED COMPULSIVES, WHO ARE UNWILLING OR UNABLE TO GET OFF OF THE ROLLER-COASTER RIDE THEY'RE ON...
I WANTED A SEVEN! DIDN'T YOU HEAR ME?
OOH, I'M OUTTA CHIPS...
SWAT
WHERE'S MY SEVEN?
SAVE MY SEAT!
IT'S HARD TO GAUGE WHAT DAMAGE, IF ANY, THE GAME OF BLACKJACK IS DOING TO THIS WOMAN'S OVERALL WELL-BEING, BUT IT SURE ISN'T HARD TO IMAGINE THE WORST.
EQUALLY DEPRESSING ARE ALL THE DESPERATE PET "THEORIES" AND "SYSTEMS" THAT REGULAR GAMBLERS ALL SWEAR BY. THESE PEOPLE NEVER LOSE—OH, NO—NOT AS LONG AS THEY STICK TO THEIR OWN "RULES"...
...I SAY LEAVE AS SOON AS YOU'RE AHEAD...
AND GRAB ALL THE FREEBIES YOU CAN ON YOUR WAY OUT THE DOOR...
IF A NEW "SHOE" SITS DOWN MID GAME, I SPLIT...
AND IF THE DEALER SHUFFLES AFTER A WINNING HAND I CALL THE MANAGER...
THESE AREN'T SUPERSTITIONS! THESE ARE FACTS!
IF THESE FOLKS DEVOTED AS MUCH TIME AND ENERGY TO ANY OTHER ENDEAVOR, THEY'D ALL BE HUGE SUCCESSES!
BUT IN SPITE OF ALL MY RANTING, I'M STILL 100% IN FAVOR OF LEGAL, UNRESTRICTED GAMBLING. PEOPLE HAVE ALWAYS GAMBLED AND ALWAYS WILL, AND THERE'S NOTHING TO BE GAINED BY TRYING TO BAN OR SUPPRESS IT...
ME BET ME BASH YOUR HEAD IN FIRST—OOF!
BASH
YOU LOSE! PAY UP!
PLUS I LOVE HAVING ALL THESE SAPS VOLUNTARILY PAYING MORE THAN THEIR FAIR SHARE IN TAXES. THANKS, SAPS! AND DON'T FORGET: IT ALL GOES TOWARD "EDUCATION"!

LATIN LAISSEZ-FAIRE

©2001 BY P. BAGGE

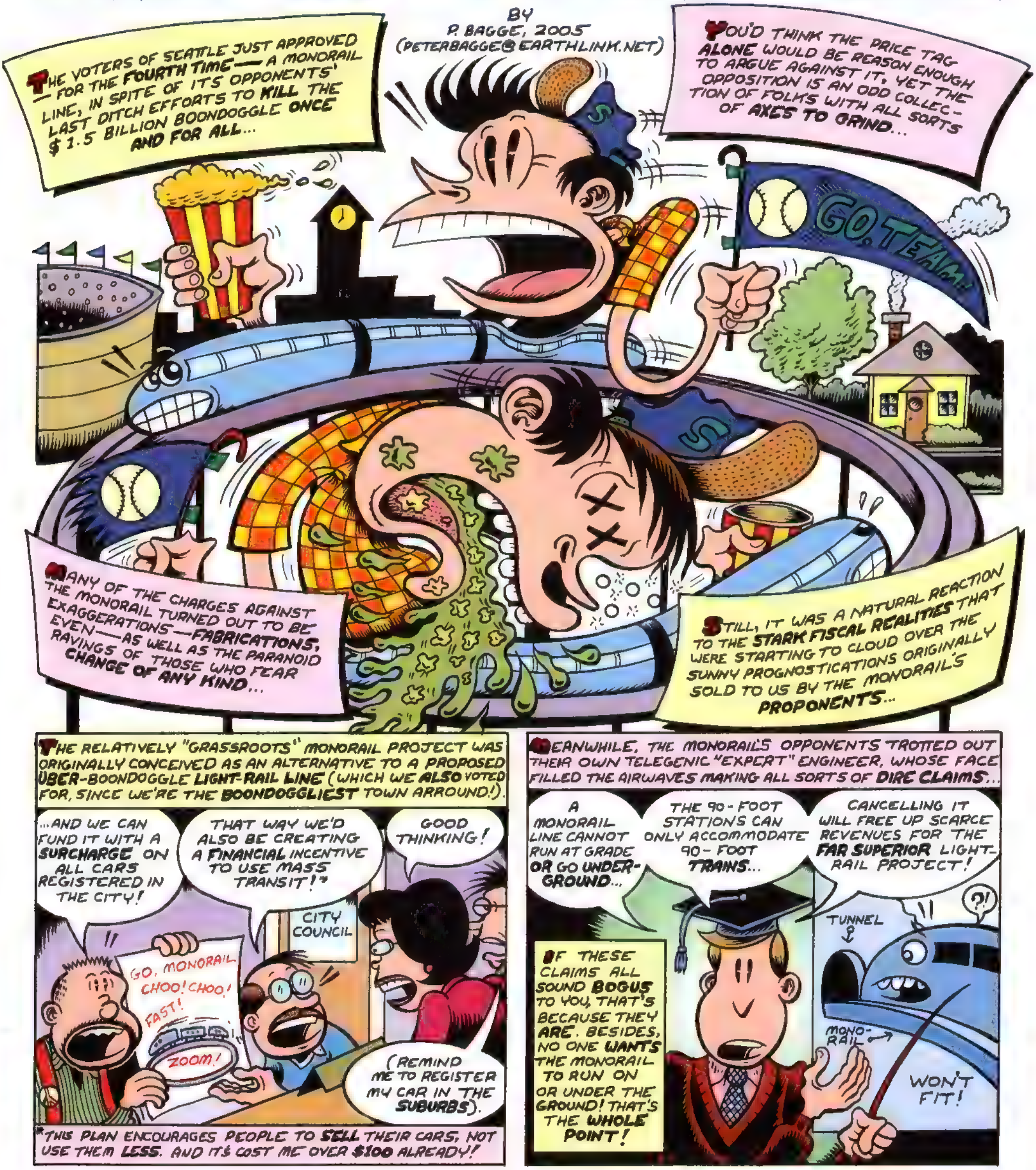
"FINE DINING AT SHELL"
THESE SANDWICHES ARE DELICIOUS!
DID YOU MAKE THEM YOURSELF?
I, UH...
DARE I TELL HER THAT I BOUGHT THEM AT THE CORNER GAS STATION?
A CELEBRATION OF THE AGE OF CONVENIENCE, WHERE YOU CAN GET JUST ABOUT ANYTHING JUST ABOUT ANYWHERE!
©2001 BY P. BAGGE (PETERBAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET)
SIP ON A LATTÉ WHILE BROWSING FOR BOOKS AT BARNES + NOBLE...
OOPS! OH DEAR...
THAT STARBUCKS STAND IS GONNA PUT US OUT OF BUSINESS!
SPLAT!
MARTHA STEWART
REMAINDER 20% OFF
...MAKE A BANK WITHDRAWL AT THE GROCERY STORE...
I'LL TAKE THIS PACK OF GUM...
AND I'D LIKE TO EMPTY MY ENTIRE BANK ACCOUNT SO I CAN LEAVE MY HUSBAND AND RUN OFF TO TAHITI!
DEBIT CARD
NO PROBLEM!
...AND WHILE AT THE HEALTH CLUB, WHY NOT UNDERMINE THE ENTIRE REASON YOU'RE THERE BY PATRONIZING THE CLUB'S OWN BAR?!
I'D LIKE A PINT OF GUINNESS...
AND A SIDE ORDER OF CHILI-FRIES, PLEASE!
COMING RIGHT UP!
OF COURSE, YOU CAN STILL ALWAYS LOAD UP ON BEEF JERKY, FILL YOUR CAR WITH GAS, ORDER A HOT TERIYAKI DINNER, BUY A CALLING CARD, PERUSE THE IMPORTED CIGARS AND PURCHASE SOME HERBAL VIAGRA, ALL AT YOUR APTLY NAMED LOCAL CONVENIENCE STORE!
YOU DON'T MIND IF I LIVE HERE, DO YOU?
?
MEANWHILE, THERE ARE RETAILERS WHO ARE TAKING SPECIALIZATION TO THE OPPOSITE EXTREME...
I KEEP TELLING YOU, WE DON'T SELL LAMPS!
WE ONLY SELL LIGHTBULBS! CAN'T YOU READ?!
JUST BULBS

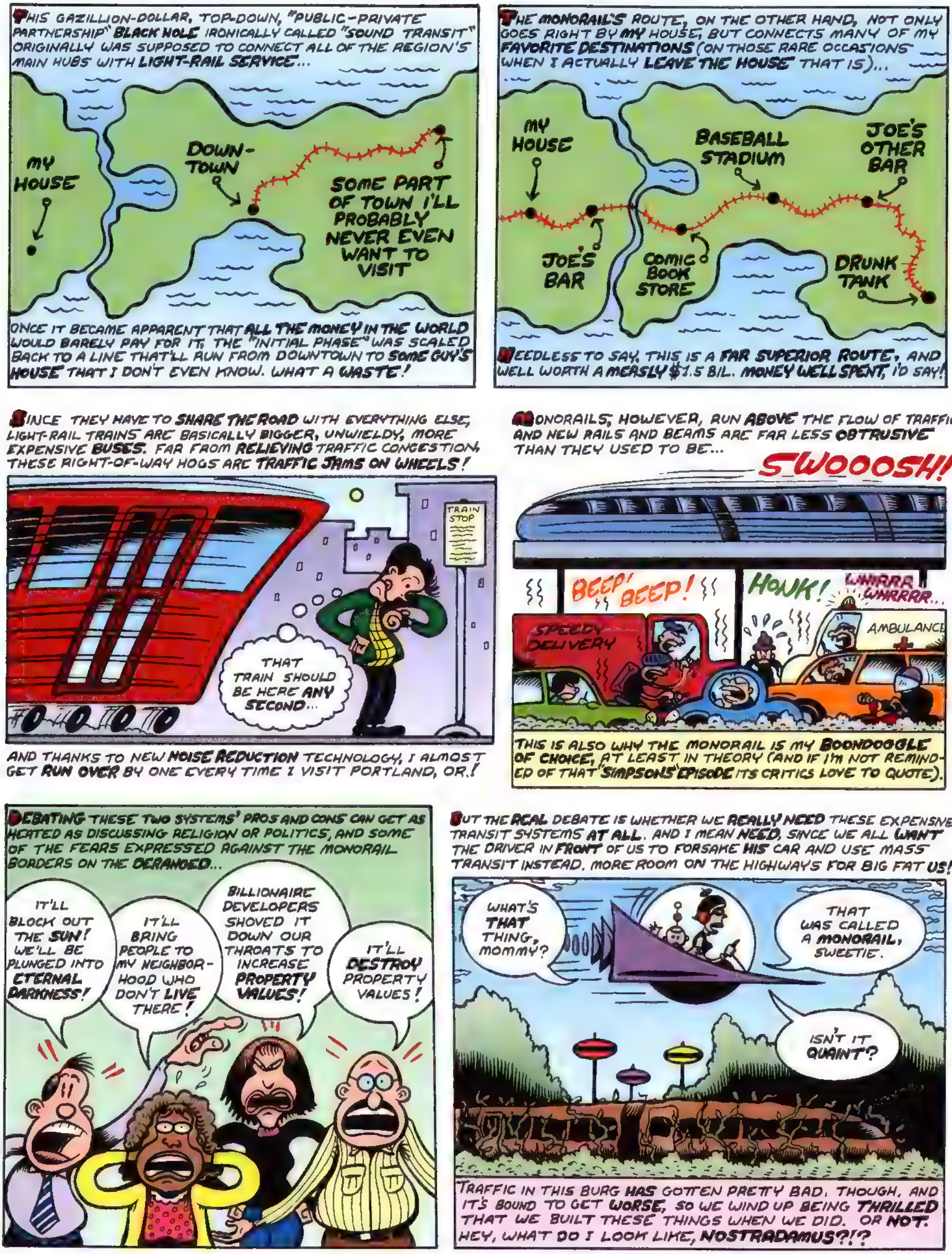
STUPID


ALL-NATURAL "ELVIS" HAIR
BUILT-IN BIKE SAFETY HELMET FOR 24-HOUR PROTECTION (MANDATORY)
LISTENING DEVICE
HYPNOTIC EYE
WI-FI INFORMATION GATHERING DEVICE
TOXIC MATERIAL SENSOR
LASER EYE
NATURALLY CAPPED TEETH
MULTIMEDIA IPOD IMPLANT
ID SLOT
INTERCHANGEABLE SEX ORGANS
EMBRYO INCUBATOR
SWISS ARMY ARM
HYDRAULIC KNEES FOR VARIABLE HEIGHT
ARMED ARM
POGO LEG
ZOOM!
P. BAGGE '05

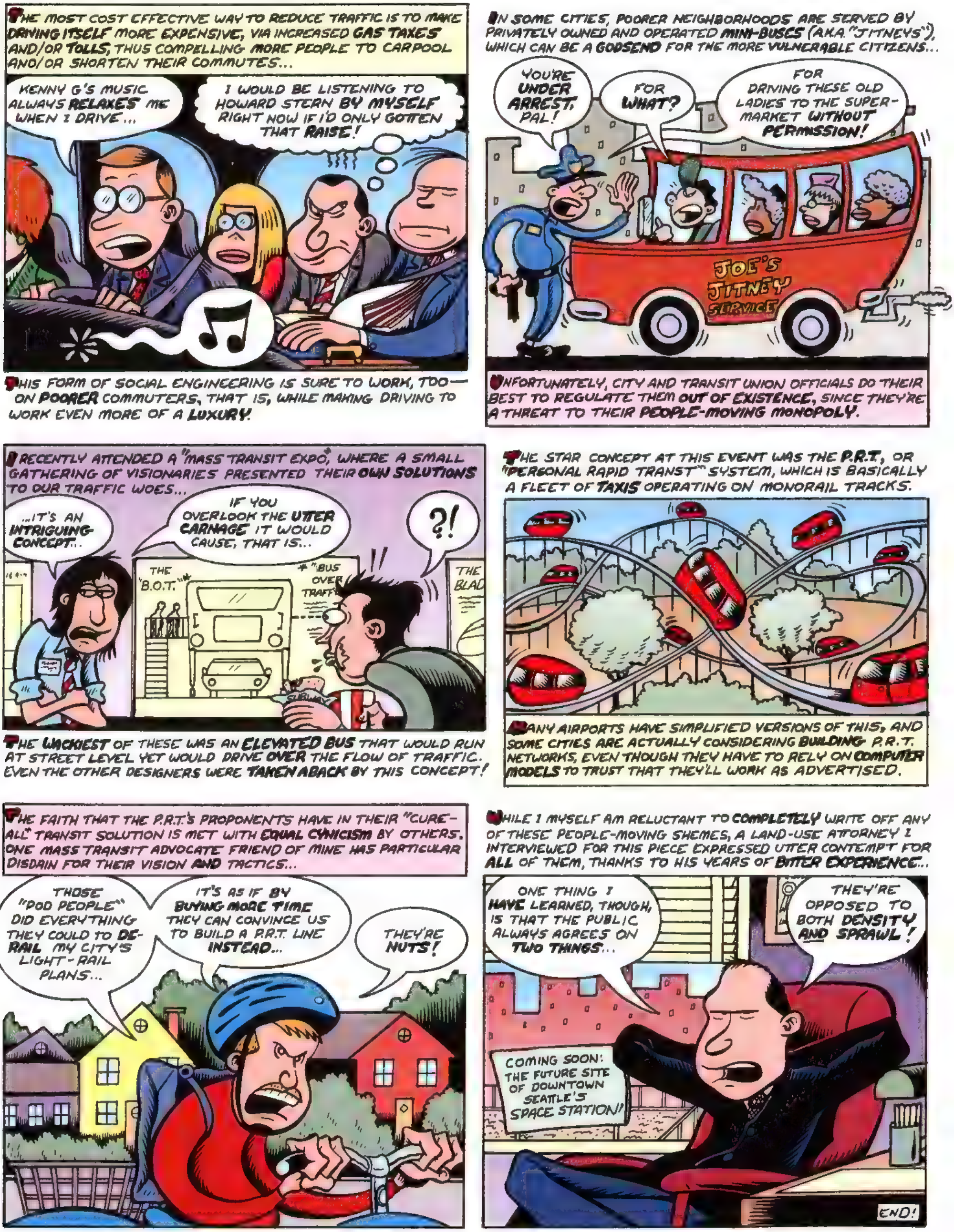
MY VERY OWN MONORAIL

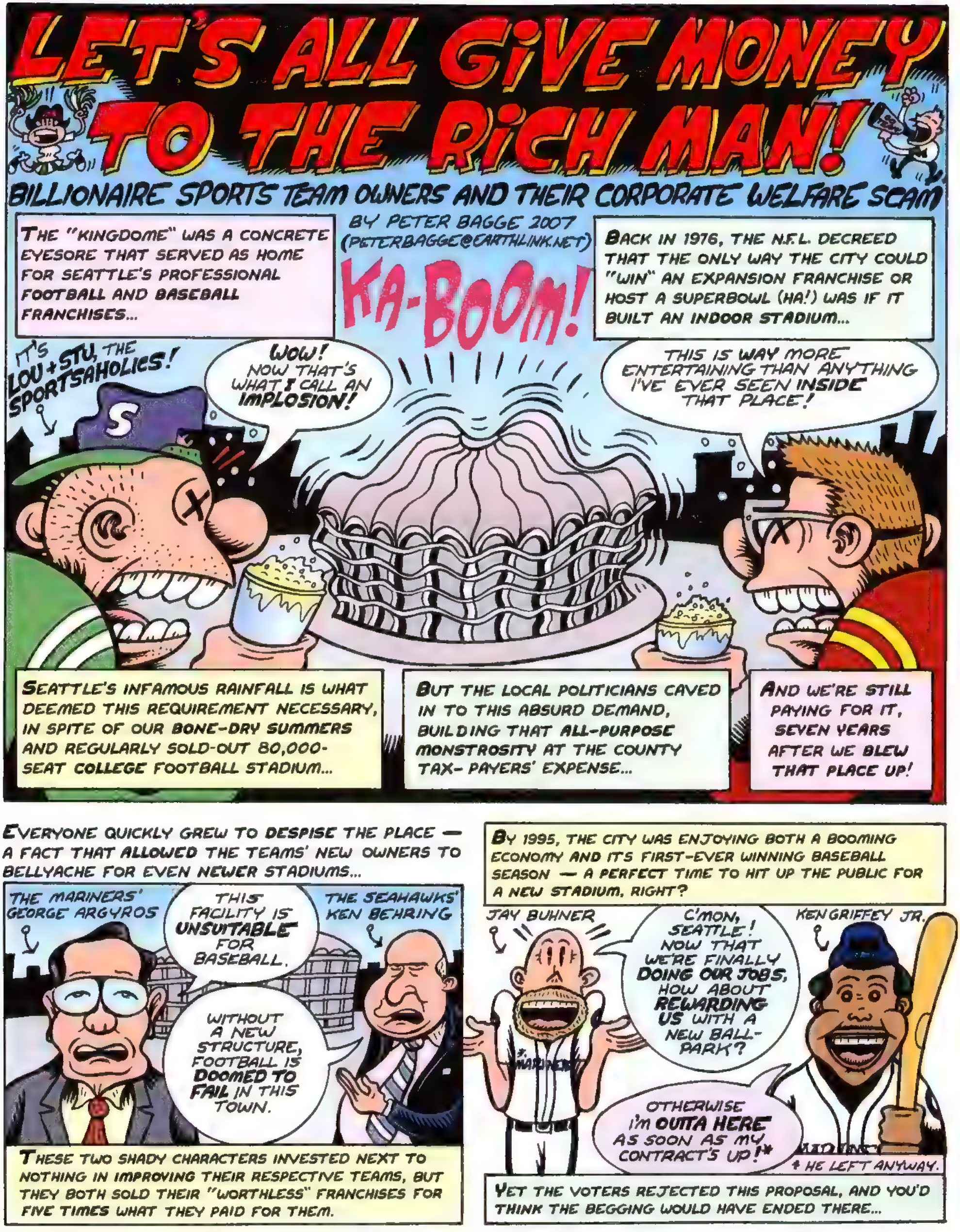
ONE CITY'S INTERNAL BATTLE OVER THE BEST WAY TO GET ITS CARTOONISTS TO AND FROM A BASEBALL GAME!

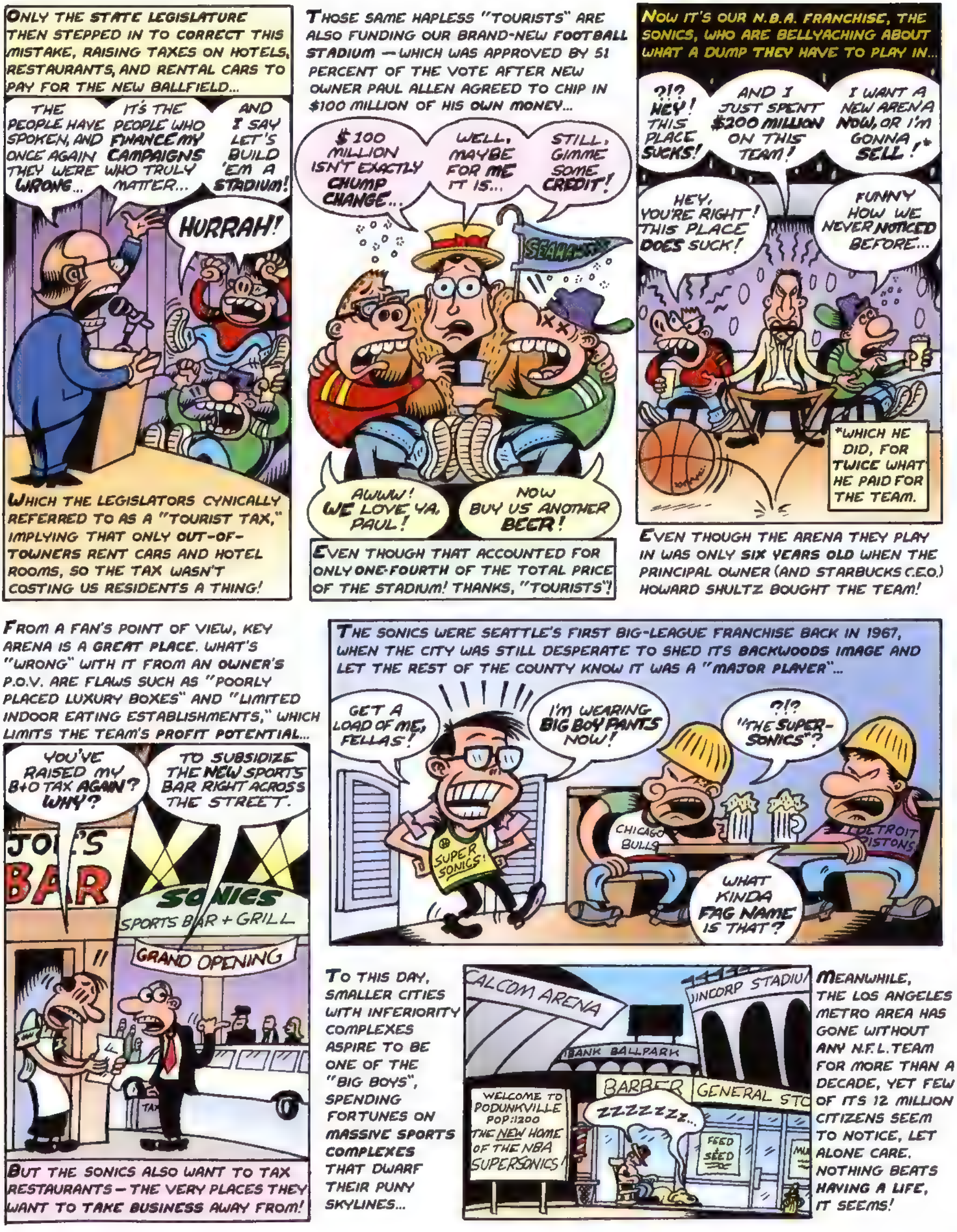


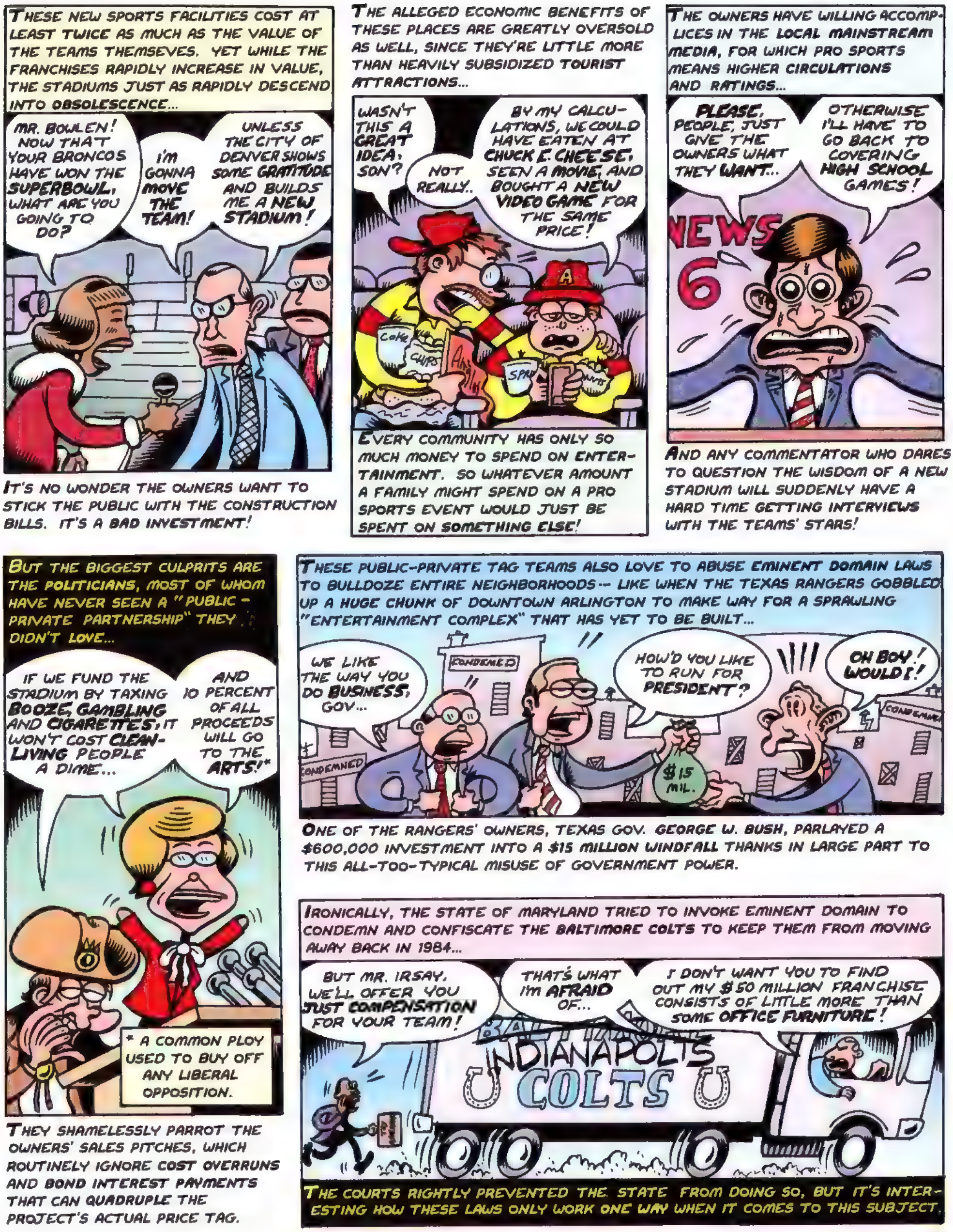

THIS GAZILLION-DOLLAR, TOP-DOWN, "PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP" BLACK HOLE IRONICALLY CALLED "SOUND TRANSIT" ORIGINALLY WAS SUPPOSED TO CONNECT ALL OF THE REGION'S MAIN HUBS WITH LIGHT-RAIL SERVICE...
MY HOUSE
DOWN-TOWN
SOME PART OF TOWN I'LL PROBABLY NEVER EVEN WANT TO VISIT
ONCE IT BECAME APPARENT THAT ALL THE MONEY IN THE WORLD WOULD BARELY PAY FOR IT, THE "INITIAL PHASE" WAS SCALED BACK TO A LINE THAT'LL RUN FROM DOWNTOWN TO SOME GUY'S HOUSE THAT I DON'T EVEN KNOW. WHAT A WASTE!
THE MONORAIL'S ROUTE, ON THE OTHER HAND, NOT ONLY GOES RIGHT BY MY HOUSE, BUT CONNECTS MANY OF MY FAVORITE DESTINATIONS (ON THOSE RARE OCCASIONS WHEN I ACTUALLY LEAVE THE HOUSE THAT IS)...
MY HOUSE
BASEBALL STADIUM
JOE'S OTHER BAR
JOE'S BAR
COMIC BOOK STORE
DRUNK TANK
NEEDLESS TO SAY, THIS IS A FAR SUPERIOR ROUTE, AND WELL WORTH A MEASLY $1.5 BIL. MONEY WELL SPENT, I'D SAY!
SINCE THEY HAVE TO SHARE THE ROAD WITH EVERYTHING ELSE, LIGHT-RAIL TRAINS ARE BASICALLY BIGGER, UNWIELDY, MORE EXPENSIVE BUSES. FAR FROM RELIEVING TRAFFIC CONGESTION, THESE RIGHT-OF-WAY HOGS ARE TRAFFIC JAMS ON WHEELS!
TRAIN STOP
THAT TRAIN SHOULD BE HERE ANY SECOND...
AND THANKS TO NEW NOISE REDUCTION TECHNOLOGY, I ALMOST GET RUN OVER BY ONE EVERY TIME I VISIT PORTLAND, OR.!
MONORAILS, HOWEVER, RUN ABOVE THE FLOW OF TRAFFIC, AND NEW RAILS AND BEAMS ARE FAR LESS OBTRUSIVE THAN THEY USED TO BE...
SWOOOSH!
BEEP! BEEP!
HONK!
WHIRRR WHIRRR...
SPEEDY DELIVERY
AMBULANCE
THIS IS ALSO WHY THE MONORAIL IS MY BOONDOGGLE OF CHOICE, AT LEAST IN THEORY (AND IF I'M NOT REMINDED OF THAT "SIMPSONS" EPISODE ITS CRITICS LOVE TO QUOTE).
DEBATING THESE TWO SYSTEMS' PROS AND CONS CAN GET AS HEATED AS DISCUSSING RELIGION OR POLITICS, AND SOME OF THE FEARS EXPRESSED AGAINST THE MONORAIL BORDERS ON THE DERANGED...
IT'LL BLOCK OUT THE SUN! WE'LL BE PLUNGED INTO ETERNAL DARKNESS!
IT'LL BRING PEOPLE TO MY NEIGHBORHOOD WHO DON'T LIVE THERE!
BILLIONAIRE DEVELOPERS SHOVED IT DOWN OUR THROATS TO INCREASE PROPERTY VALUES!
IT'LL DESTROY PROPERTY VALUES!
BUT THE REAL DEBATE IS WHETHER WE REALLY NEED THESE EXPENSIVE TRANSIT SYSTEMS AT ALL. AND I MEAN NEED, SINCE WE ALL WANT THE DRIVER IN FRONT OF US TO FORSAKE HIS CAR AND USE MASS TRANSIT INSTEAD. MORE ROOM ON THE HIGHWAYS FOR BIG FAT US!
WHAT'S THAT THING, MOMMY?
THAT WAS CALLED A MONORAIL, SWEETIE.
ISN'T IT QUAINT?
TRAFFIC IN THIS BURG HAS GOTTEN PRETTY BAD, THOUGH, AND IT'S BOUND TO GET WORSE, SO WE WIND UP BEING THRILLED THAT WE BUILT THESE THINGS WHEN WE DID. OR NOT. HEY, WHAT DO I LOOK LIKE, NOSTRADAMUS?!?

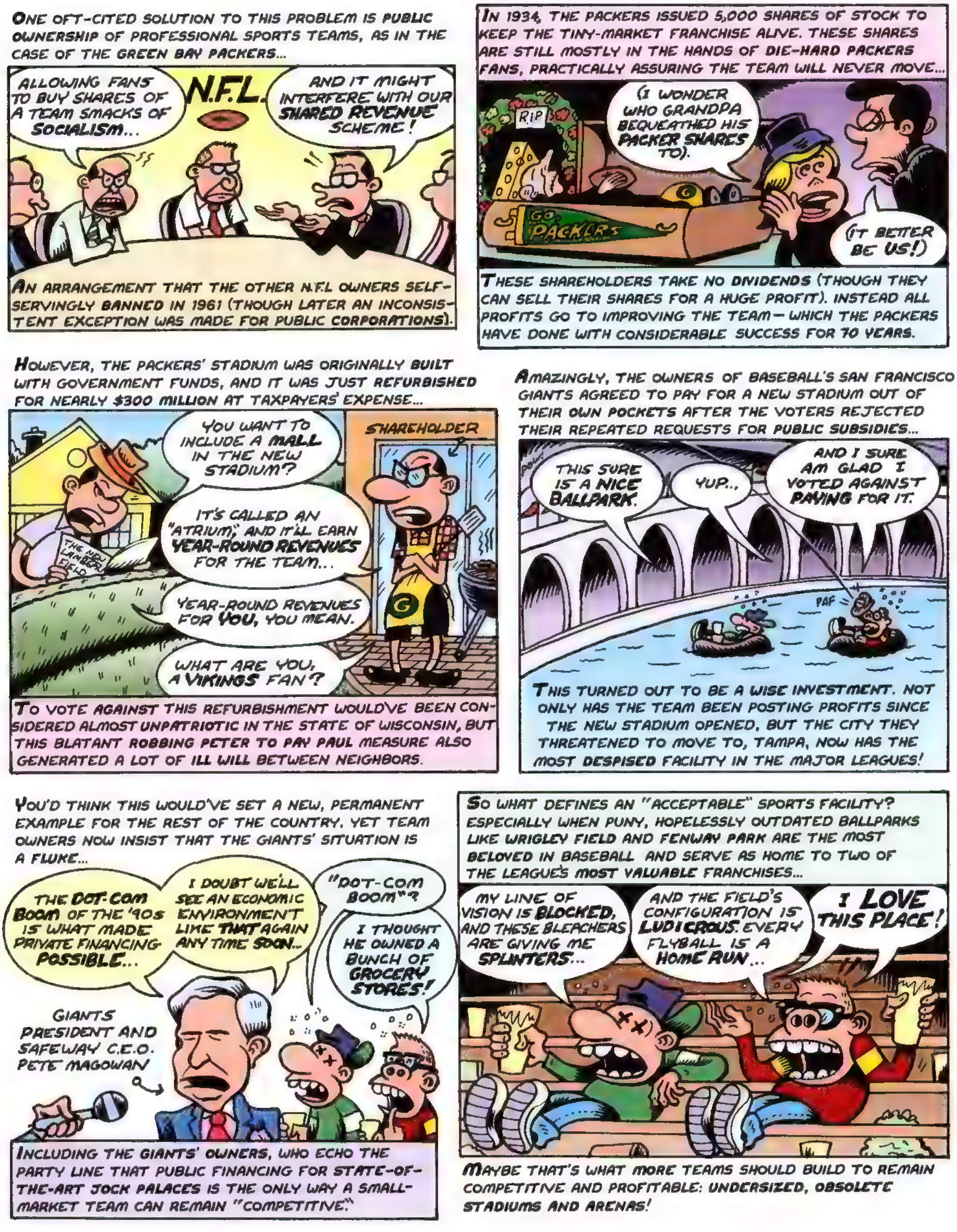
WHILE THESE MASS TRANSIT PROJECTS MAY BE AN ECONOMIC BOON TO THE NEIGHBORHOODS THEY SERVE, THEY ALSO MAY SPELL DISASTER FOR THE MANY SMALL BUSINESSES THEY'LL BE DISPLACING...
COMING SOON: THE FUTURE SITE OF THE NEW MONORAIL STATION!
Salon
COINS AND STAMPS
PIZZA
SAY NO TO THE MONORAIL
MONORAIL NO!
OF COURSE, WE'RE OBLIGED TO PAY FOR THEIR RELOCATION, BUT THEIR HARD-EARNED CLIENTELE ISN'T LIKELY TO MOVE WITH THEM.
IN FACT, A GOVERNMENT EXERCISING ITS EMINENT DOMAIN PRIVILEGES IS NEVER A PRETTY SIGHT WHEN YOU'RE ON THE FRONT LINES...
WE'VE DECIDED TO CONDEMN YOUR HOTEL, SINCE IT'S THE UGLIEST BUILDING AT THIS INTERSECTION...
BUT I JUST TOOK OUT A BANK LOAN TO RENOVATE IT!
OH, WELL. TOO LATE!
BASH
IN THE NAME OF "PROGRESS," A WELL-FINANCED GRAND VISION OFTEN WINDS UP CRUSHING MANY SMALLER, HUMBLER ASPIRATIONS.
YET THESE ISSUES ALSO ILLUSTRATE WHY A PRIVATELY BUILT AND RUN MASS TRANSIT SYSTEM ON THIS SCALE WOULD BE ALL BUT IMPOSSIBLE...
I'M CONDEMNING YOUR PROPERTY TO MAKE ROOM FOR MY MONORAIL...
WHAT?
THINK AGAIN, PAL!
HOTEL
BLUEPRINT FOR MY STATIONS
EXTENDING EMINENT DOMAIN RIGHTS TO A PRIVATE COMPANY SHOULD BE AN IMPOSSIBILITY, EVEN THOUGH WE DO IT ALL THE TIME IN THE FORM OF SPORTS STADIUMS AND LUXURY CONDO COMPLEXES.
THERE'S AN UNDENIABLE ANTI-AUTOMOBILE MENTALITY BEHIND ALL THESE TRANSIT PROJECTS—ESPECIALLY IN A COMMUNITY AS "ECOTOPIAN" AS SEATTLE IS...
?!?
SAY NO TO GLOBAL WARMING
FUME!
BELCH!
THIS SENTIMENT IS OFTEN EXPRESSED WITH A RELIGIOUS FERVOR THAT INCLUDES THE BELIEF THAT WE'RE CAUSING ANOTHER GLACIER TO MELT EVERY TIME WE DRIVE TO THE GROCERY STORE.
THE WORST ARE THE BICYCLE ADVOCATES, WHO FORCED US TO INSTALL UNDERUSED DESIGNATED BIKE LANES ALL OVER THE PLACE, SOMETIMES AT GREAT COST TO CERTAIN BUSINESSES...
WE WANT THIS BIKE PATH TO CONTINUE ALONG THIS ROUTE...
BUT, THAT'LL SEND MY INSURANCE RATES THROUGH THE ROOF...
DON'T YOU CARE ABOUT THE EARTH?
SVEN'S CHUM GRINDING
OTHER COMMUNITY ACTIVISTS ONCE BLOCKED THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONDOS ON THE FORMER SITE OF ONE OF THESE AESTHETICALLY UNPLEASING BUSINESSES, CLAIMING THEY WANTED TO PRESERVE THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD'S "INDUSTRIAL BASE"!
LOOK, I MYSELF DON'T LIKE BEING DEPENDENT ON A CAR TO GET AROUND...
WHICH IS WHY I CHOOSE TO LIVE IN A PEDESTRIAN-FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD.
STILL, A CAR CAN TAKE YOU ANYWHERE AT ANY TIME, WHICH IS WHY I CHOOSE TO OWN ONE...
GRAND CANYON 1,500 MI
WHY, LOOK AT ME NOW!
I'M OFF TO SEE THE GRAND CANYON!
ON A WHIM! WHEEE!

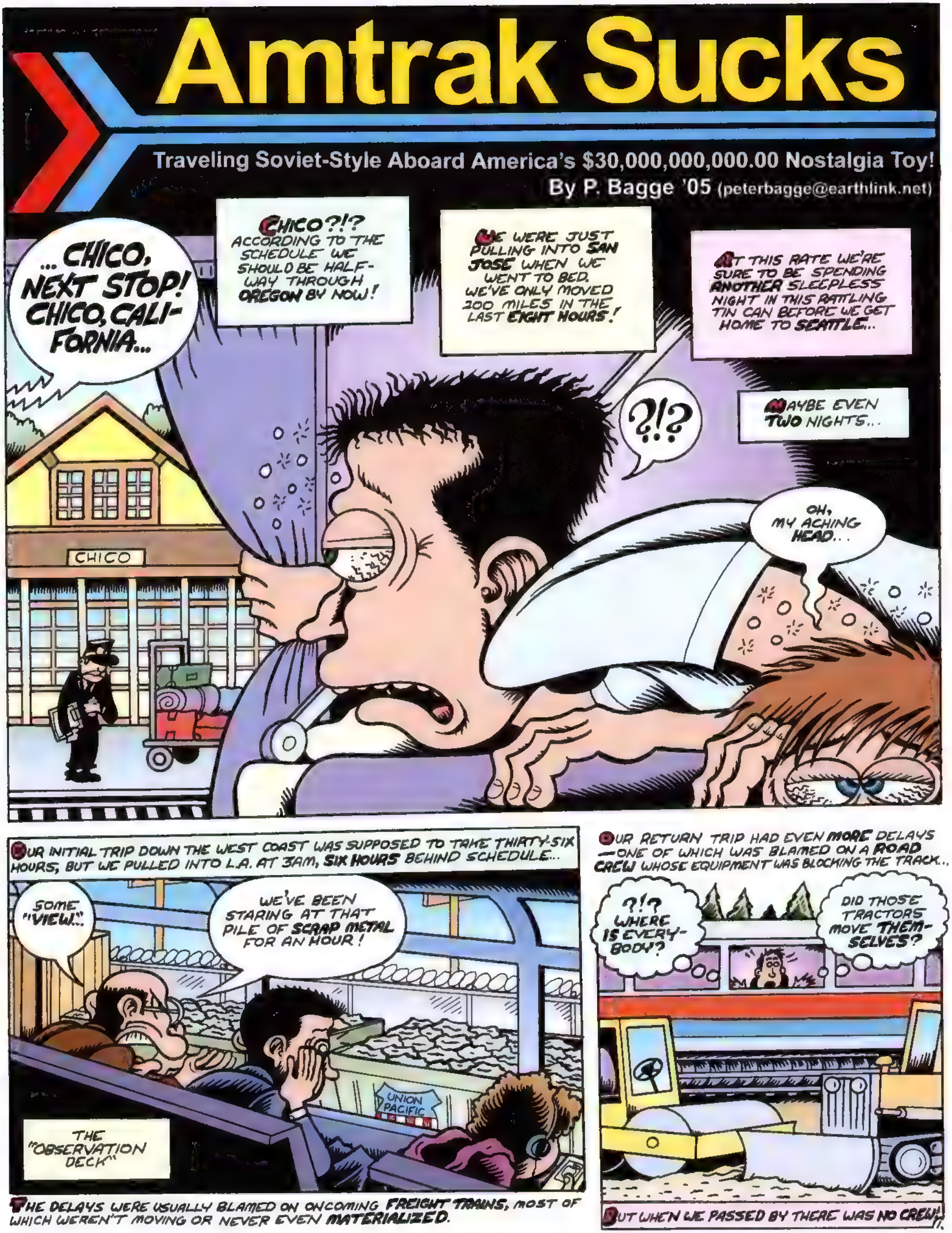

THE MOST COST EFFECTIVE WAY TO REDUCE TRAFFIC IS TO MAKE DRIVING ITSELF MORE EXPENSIVE, VIA INCREASED GAS TAXES AND/OR TOLLS, THUS COMPELLING MORE PEOPLE TO CARPOOL AND/OR SHORTEN THEIR COMMUTES...
KENNY G'S MUSIC ALWAYS RELAXES ME WHEN I DRIVE...
I WOULD BE LISTENING TO HOWARD STERN BY MYSELF RIGHT NOW IF I'D ONLY GOTTEN THAT RAISE!
THIS FORM OF SOCIAL ENGINEERING IS SURE TO WORK, TOO— ON POORER COMMUTERS, THAT IS, WHILE MAKING DRIVING TO WORK EVEN MORE OF A LUXURY.
IN SOME CITIES, POORER NEIGHBORHOODS ARE SERVED BY PRIVATELY OWNED AND OPERATED MINI-BUSES (A.K.A. "JITNEYS"), WHICH CAN BE A GODSEND FOR THE MORE VULNERABLE CITIZENS...
YOU'RE UNDER ARREST, PAL!
FOR WHAT?
FOR DRIVING THESE OLD LADIES TO THE SUPER-MARKET WITHOUT PERMISSION!
JOE'S JITNEY SERVICE
UNFORTUNATELY, CITY AND TRANSIT UNION OFFICIALS DO THEIR BEST TO REGULATE THEM OUT OF EXISTENCE, SINCE THEY'RE A THREAT TO THEIR PEOPLE-MOVING MONOPOLY.
I RECENTLY ATTENDED A "MASS TRANSIT EXPO," WHERE A SMALL GATHERING OF VISIONARIES PRESENTED THEIR OWN SOLUTIONS TO OUR TRAFFIC WOES...
...IT'S AN INTRIGUING CONCEPT...
IF YOU OVERLOOK THE UTTER CARNAGE IT WOULD CAUSE, THAT IS...
?!
THE "B.O.T."*
* "BUS OVER TRAFF
THE BLAD
THE WACKIEST OF THESE WAS AN ELEVATED BUS THAT WOULD RUN AT STREET LEVEL YET WOULD DRIVE OVER THE FLOW OF TRAFFIC. EVEN THE OTHER DESIGNERS WERE TAKEN ABACK BY THIS CONCEPT!
THE STAR CONCEPT AT THIS EVENT WAS THE P.R.T., OR "PERSONAL RAPID TRANSIT" SYSTEM, WHICH IS BASICALLY A FLEET OF TAXIS OPERATING ON MONORAIL TRACKS.
MANY AIRPORTS HAVE SIMPLIFIED VERSIONS OF THIS, AND SOME CITIES ARE ACTUALLY CONSIDERING BUILDING P.R.T. NETWORKS, EVEN THOUGH THEY HAVE TO RELY ON COMPUTER MODELS TO TRUST THAT THEY'LL WORK AS ADVERTISED.
THE FAITH THAT THE P.R.T.'S PROPONENTS HAVE IN THEIR "CURE-ALL" TRANSIT SOLUTION IS MET WITH EQUAL CYNICISM BY OTHERS. ONE MASS TRANSIT ADVOCATE FRIEND OF MINE HAS PARTICULAR DISDAIN FOR THEIR VISION AND TACTICS...
THOSE "POD PEOPLE" DID EVERYTHING THEY COULD TO DE-RAIL MY CITY'S LIGHT-RAIL PLANS...
IT'S AS IF BY BUYING MORE TIME THEY CAN CONVINCE US TO BUILD A P.R.T. LINE INSTEAD...
THEY'RE NUTS!
WHILE I MYSELF AM RELUCTANT TO COMPLETELY WRITE OFF ANY OF THESE PEOPLE-MOVING SHEMES, A LAND-USE ATTORNEY I INTERVIEWED FOR THIS PIECE EXPRESSED UTTER CONTEMPT FOR ALL OF THEM, THANKS TO HIS YEARS OF BITTER EXPERIENCE...
ONE THING I HAVE LEARNED, THOUGH, IS THAT THE PUBLIC ALWAYS AGREES ON TWO THINGS...
THEY'RE OPPOSED TO BOTH DENSITY AND SPRAWL!
COMING SOON: THE FUTURE SITE OF DOWNTOWN SEATTLE'S SPACE STATION!
END!

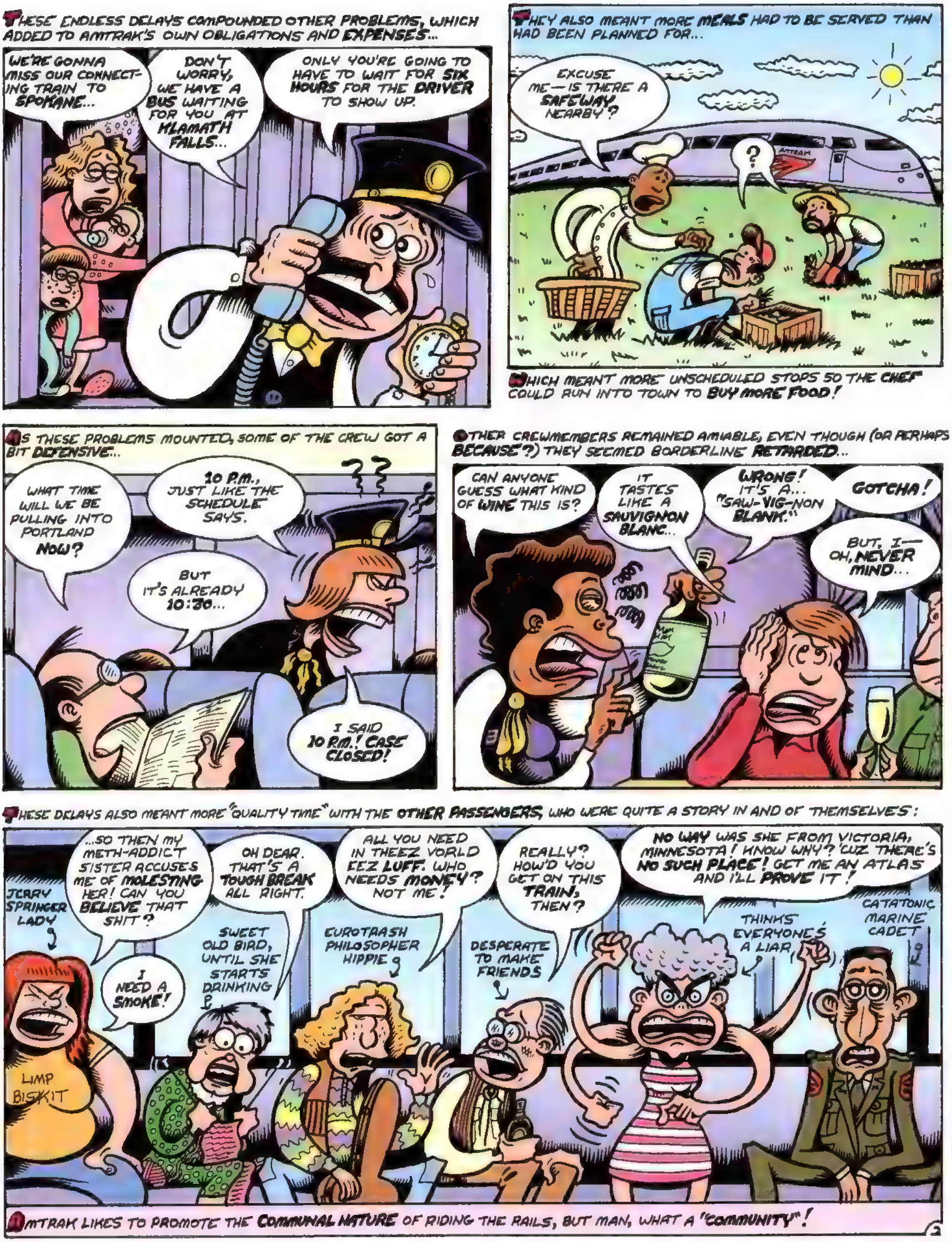

LET'S ALL GIVE MONEY TO THE RICH MAN!
BILLIONAIRE SPORTS TEAM OWNERS AND THEIR CORPORATE WELFARE SCAM
BY PETER BAGGE 2007
(PETERBAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET)
THE "KINGDOME" WAS A CONCRETE EYESORE THAT SERVED AS HOME FOR SEATTLE'S PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL AND BASEBALL FRANCHISES...
BACK IN 1976, THE N.F.L. DECREED THAT THE ONLY WAY THE CITY COULD "WIN" AN EXPANSION FRANCHISE OR HOST A SUPERBOWL (HA!) WAS IF IT BUILT AN INDOOR STADIUM...
KA-BOOM!
IT'S LOU + STU, THE SPORTSAHOLICS!
WOW! NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL AN IMPLOSION!
THIS IS WAY MORE ENTERTAINING THAN ANYTHING I'VE EVER SEEN INSIDE THAT PLACE!
SEATTLE'S INFAMOUS RAINFALL IS WHAT DEEMED THIS REQUIREMENT NECESSARY, IN SPITE OF OUR BONE-DRY SUMMERS AND REGULARLY SOLD-OUT 80,000-SEAT COLLEGE FOOTBALL STADIUM...
BUT THE LOCAL POLITICIANS CAVED IN TO THIS ABSURD DEMAND, BUILDING THAT ALL-PURPOSE MONSTROSITY AT THE COUNTY TAX-PAYERS' EXPENSE...
AND WE'RE STILL PAYING FOR IT, SEVEN YEARS AFTER WE BLEW THAT PLACE UP!
EVERYONE QUICKLY GREW TO DESPISE THE PLACE — A FACT THAT ALLOWED THE TEAMS' NEW OWNERS TO BELLYACHE FOR EVEN NEWER STADIUMS...
THE MARINERS' GEORGE ARGYROS
THIS FACILITY IS UNSUITABLE FOR BASEBALL.
THE SEAHAWKS' KEN BEHRING
WITHOUT A NEW STRUCTURE, FOOTBALL IS DOOMED TO FAIL IN THIS TOWN.
THESE TWO SHADY CHARACTERS INVESTED NEXT TO NOTHING IN IMPROVING THEIR RESPECTIVE TEAMS, BUT THEY BOTH SOLD THEIR "WORTHLESS" FRANCHISES FOR FIVE TIMES WHAT THEY PAID FOR THEM.
BY 1995, THE CITY WAS ENJOYING BOTH A BOOMING ECONOMY AND ITS FIRST-EVER WINNING BASEBALL SEASON — A PERFECT TIME TO HIT UP THE PUBLIC FOR A NEW STADIUM, RIGHT?
JAY BUHNER
C'MON, SEATTLE! NOW THAT WE'RE FINALLY DOING OUR JOBS, HOW ABOUT REWARDING US WITH A NEW BALL-PARK?
KEN GRIFFEY JR.
OTHERWISE I'M OUTTA HERE AS SOON AS MY CONTRACT'S UP!*
MARINERS
* HE LEFT ANYWAY.
YET THE VOTERS REJECTED THIS PROPOSAL, AND YOU'D THINK THE BEGGING WOULD HAVE ENDED THERE...


ONLY THE STATE LEGISLATURE THEN STEPPED IN TO CORRECT THIS MISTAKE, RAISING TAXES ON HOTELS, RESTAURANTS, AND RENTAL CARS TO PAY FOR THE NEW BALLFIELD...
THE PEOPLE HAVE SPOKEN, AND ONCE AGAIN THEY WERE WRONG...
IT'S THE PEOPLE WHO FINANCE MY CAMPAIGNS WHO TRULY MATTER...
AND I SAY LET'S BUILD 'EM A STADIUM!
HURRAH!
WHICH THE LEGISLATORS CYNICALLY REFERRED TO AS A "TOURIST TAX," IMPLYING THAT ONLY OUT-OF-TOWNERS RENT CARS AND HOTEL ROOMS, SO THE TAX WASN'T COSTING US RESIDENTS A THING!
THOSE SAME HAPLESS "TOURISTS" ARE ALSO FUNDING OUR BRAND-NEW FOOTBALL STADIUM — WHICH WAS APPROVED BY 51 PERCENT OF THE VOTE AFTER NEW OWNER PAUL ALLEN AGREED TO CHIP IN $100 MILLION OF HIS OWN MONEY...
$100 MILLION ISN'T EXACTLY CHUMP CHANGE...
WELL, MAYBE FOR ME IT IS...
STILL, GIMME SOME CREDIT!
SEAHAWKS
AWWW! WE LOVE YA, PAUL!
NOW BUY US ANOTHER BEER!
EVEN THOUGH THAT ACCOUNTED FOR ONLY ONE-FOURTH OF THE TOTAL PRICE OF THE STADIUM! THANKS, "TOURISTS"!
NOW IT'S OUR N.B.A. FRANCHISE, THE SONICS, WHO ARE BELLYACHING ABOUT WHAT A DUMP THEY HAVE TO PLAY IN...
?!? HEY! THIS PLACE SUCKS!
AND I JUST SPENT $200 MILLION ON THIS TEAM!
I WANT A NEW ARENA NOW, OR I'M GONNA SELL!*
HEY, YOU'RE RIGHT! THIS PLACE DOES SUCK!
FUNNY HOW WE NEVER NOTICED BEFORE...
*WHICH HE DID, FOR TWICE WHAT HE PAID FOR THE TEAM.
EVEN THOUGH THE ARENA THEY PLAY IN WAS ONLY SIX YEARS OLD WHEN THE PRINCIPAL OWNER (AND STARBUCKS C.E.O.) HOWARD SHULTZ BOUGHT THE TEAM!
FROM A FAN'S POINT OF VIEW, KEY ARENA IS A GREAT PLACE. WHAT'S "WRONG" WITH IT FROM AN OWNER'S P.O.V. ARE FLAWS SUCH AS "POORLY PLACED LUXURY BOXES" AND "LIMITED INDOOR EATING ESTABLISHMENTS," WHICH LIMITS THE TEAM'S PROFIT POTENTIAL...
YOU'VE RAISED MY B+O TAX AGAIN? WHY?
TO SUBSIDIZE THE NEW SPORTS BAR RIGHT ACROSS THE STREET.
JOE'S BAR
SONICS SPORTS BAR + GRILL
GRAND OPENING
BUT THE SONICS ALSO WANT TO TAX RESTAURANTS — THE VERY PLACES THEY WANT TO TAKE BUSINESS AWAY FROM!
THE SONICS WERE SEATTLE'S FIRST BIG-LEAGUE FRANCHISE BACK IN 1967, WHEN THE CITY WAS STILL DESPERATE TO SHED ITS BACKWOODS IMAGE AND LET THE REST OF THE COUNTY KNOW IT WAS A "MAJOR PLAYER"...
GET A LOAD OF ME, FELLAS!
I'M WEARING BIG BOY PANTS NOW!
?!? "THE SUPER-SONICS"?
SUPER SONICS
CHICAGO BULLS
DETROIT PISTONS
WHAT KINDA FAG NAME IS THAT?
TO THIS DAY, SMALLER CITIES WITH INFERIORITY COMPLEXES ASPIRE TO BE ONE OF THE "BIG BOYS", SPENDING FORTUNES ON MASSIVE SPORTS COMPLEXES THAT DWARF THEIR PUNY SKYLINES...
CALCOM ARENA
UNCORP STADIUM
BANK BALLPARK
BARBER
GENERAL STO
WELCOME TO PODUNKVILLE POP: 1200 THE NEW HOME OF THE NBA SUPERSONICS!
ZZZZZZZ...
FEED SEED
MEANWHILE, THE LOS ANGELES METRO AREA HAS GONE WITHOUT ANY N.F.L. TEAM FOR MORE THAN A DECADE, YET FEW OF ITS 12 MILLION CITIZENS SEEM TO NOTICE, LET ALONE CARE. NOTHING BEATS HAVING A LIFE, IT SEEMS!

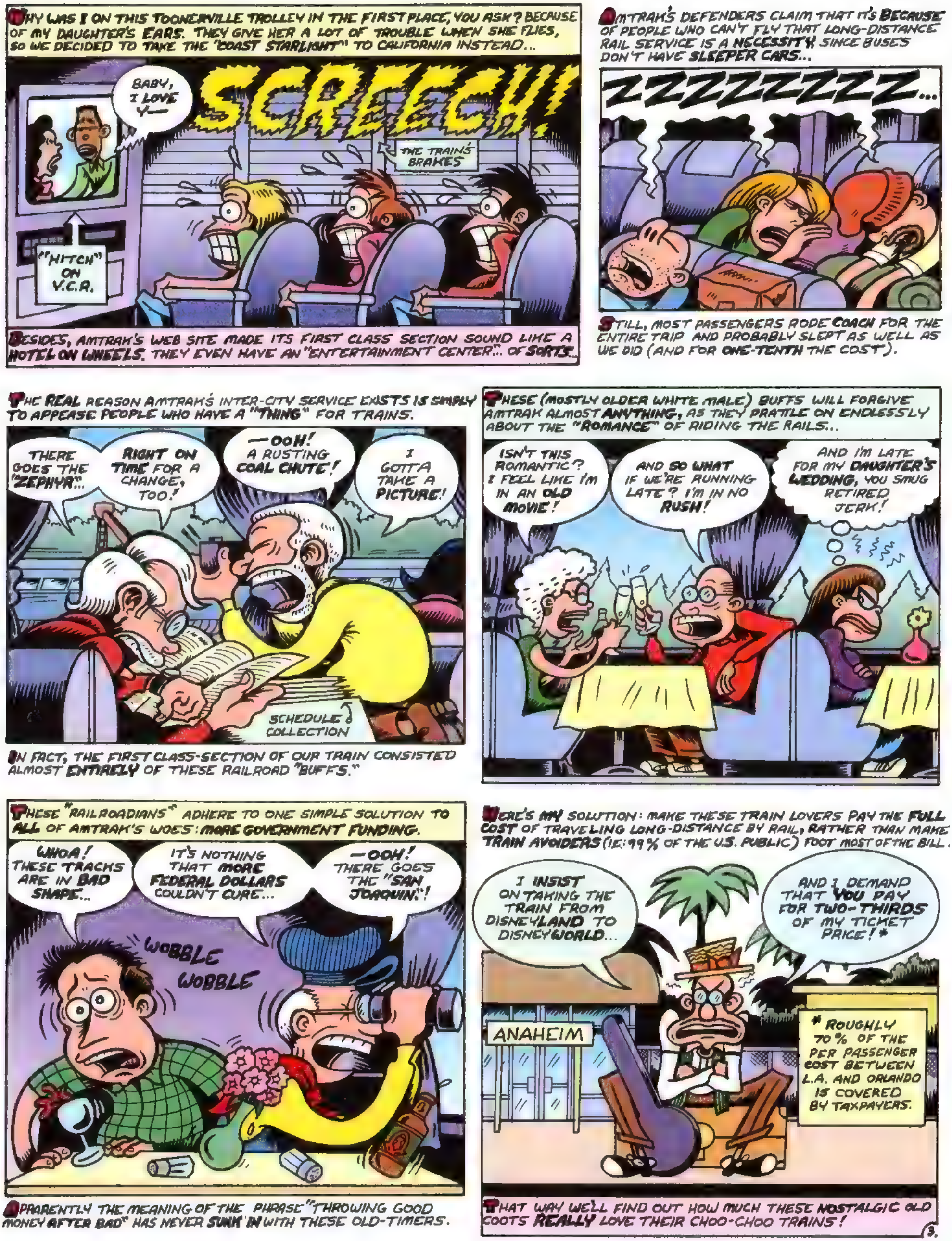

THESE NEW SPORTS FACILITIES COST AT LEAST TWICE AS MUCH AS THE VALUE OF THE TEAMS THEMSEVES. YET WHILE THE FRANCHISES RAPIDLY INCREASE IN VALUE, THE STADIUMS JUST AS RAPIDLY DESCEND INTO OBSOLESCENCE...
MR. BOWLEN! NOW THAT YOUR BRONCOS HAVE WON THE SUPERBOWL, WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
I'M GONNA MOVE THE TEAM!
UNLESS THE CITY OF DENVER SHOWS SOME GRATITUDE AND BUILDS ME A NEW STADIUM!
IT'S NO WONDER THE OWNERS WANT TO STICK THE PUBLIC WITH THE CONSTRUCTION BILLS. IT'S A BAD INVESTMENT!
THE ALLEGED ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF THESE PLACES ARE GREATLY OVERSOLD AS WELL, SINCE THEY'RE LITTLE MORE THAN HEAVILY SUBSIDIZED TOURIST ATTRACTIONS...
WASN'T THIS A GREAT IDEA, SON?
NOT REALLY..
BY MY CALCULATIONS, WE COULD HAVE EATEN AT CHUCK E. CHEESE, SEEN A MOVIE, AND BOUGHT A NEW VIDEO GAME FOR THE SAME PRICE!
EVERY COMMUNITY HAS ONLY SO MUCH MONEY TO SPEND ON ENTERTAINMENT. SO WHATEVER AMOUNT A FAMILY MIGHT SPEND ON A PRO SPORTS EVENT WOULD JUST BE SPENT ON SOMETHING ELSE!
THE OWNERS HAVE WILLING ACCOMPLICES IN THE LOCAL MAINSTREAM MEDIA, FOR WHICH PRO SPORTS MEANS HIGHER CIRCULATIONS AND RATINGS...
PLEASE, PEOPLE, JUST GIVE THE OWNERS WHAT THEY WANT...
OTHERWISE I'LL HAVE TO GO BACK TO COVERING HIGH SCHOOL GAMES!
NEWS 6
AND ANY COMMENTATOR WHO DARES TO QUESTION THE WISDOM OF A NEW STADIUM WILL SUDDENLY HAVE A HARD TIME GETTING INTERVIEWS WITH THE TEAMS' STARS!
BUT THE BIGGEST CULPRITS ARE THE POLITICIANS, MOST OF WHOM HAVE NEVER SEEN A "PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP" THEY DIDN'T LOVE...
IF WE FUND THE STADIUM BY TAXING BOOZE, GAMBLING AND CIGARETTES, IT WON'T COST CLEAN-LIVING PEOPLE A DIME...
AND 10 PERCENT OF ALL PROCEEDS WILL GO TO THE ARTS!*
* A COMMON PLOY USED TO BUY OFF ANY LIBERAL OPPOSITION.
THEY SHAMELESSLY PARROT THE OWNERS' SALES PITCHES, WHICH ROUTINELY IGNORE COST OVERRUNS AND BOND INTEREST PAYMENTS THAT CAN QUADRUPLE THE PROJECT'S ACTUAL PRICE TAG.
THESE PUBLIC-PRIVATE TAG TEAMS ALSO LOVE TO ABUSE EMINENT DOMAIN LAWS TO BULLDOZE ENTIRE NEIGHBORHOODS -- LIKE WHEN THE TEXAS RANGERS GOBBLED UP A HUGE CHUNK OF DOWNTOWN ARLINGTON TO MAKE WAY FOR A SPRAWLING "ENTERTAINMENT COMPLEX" THAT HAS YET TO BE BUILT...
WE LIKE THE WAY YOU DO BUSINESS, GOV...
HOW'D YOU LIKE TO RUN FOR PRESIDENT?
OH BOY! WOULD I!
CONDEMNED
$15 MIL.
ONE OF THE RANGERS' OWNERS, TEXAS GOV. GEORGE W. BUSH, PARLAYED A $600,000 INVESTMENT INTO A $15 MILLION WINDFALL THANKS IN LARGE PART TO THIS ALL-TOO-TYPICAL MISUSE OF GOVERNMENT POWER.
IRONICALLY, THE STATE OF MARYLAND TRIED TO INVOKE EMINENT DOMAIN TO CONDEMN AND CONFISCATE THE BALTIMORE COLTS TO KEEP THEM FROM MOVING AWAY BACK IN 1984...
BUT MR. IRSAY, WE'LL OFFER YOU JUST COMPENSATION FOR YOUR TEAM!
THAT'S WHAT I'M AFRAID OF...
I DON'T WANT YOU TO FIND OUT MY $50 MILLION FRANCHISE CONSISTS OF LITTLE MORE THAN SOME OFFICE FURNITURE!
INDIANAPOLIS COLTS
THE COURTS RIGHTLY PREVENTED THE STATE FROM DOING SO, BUT IT'S INTERESTING HOW THESE LAWS ONLY WORK ONE WAY WHEN IT COMES TO THIS SUBJECT.

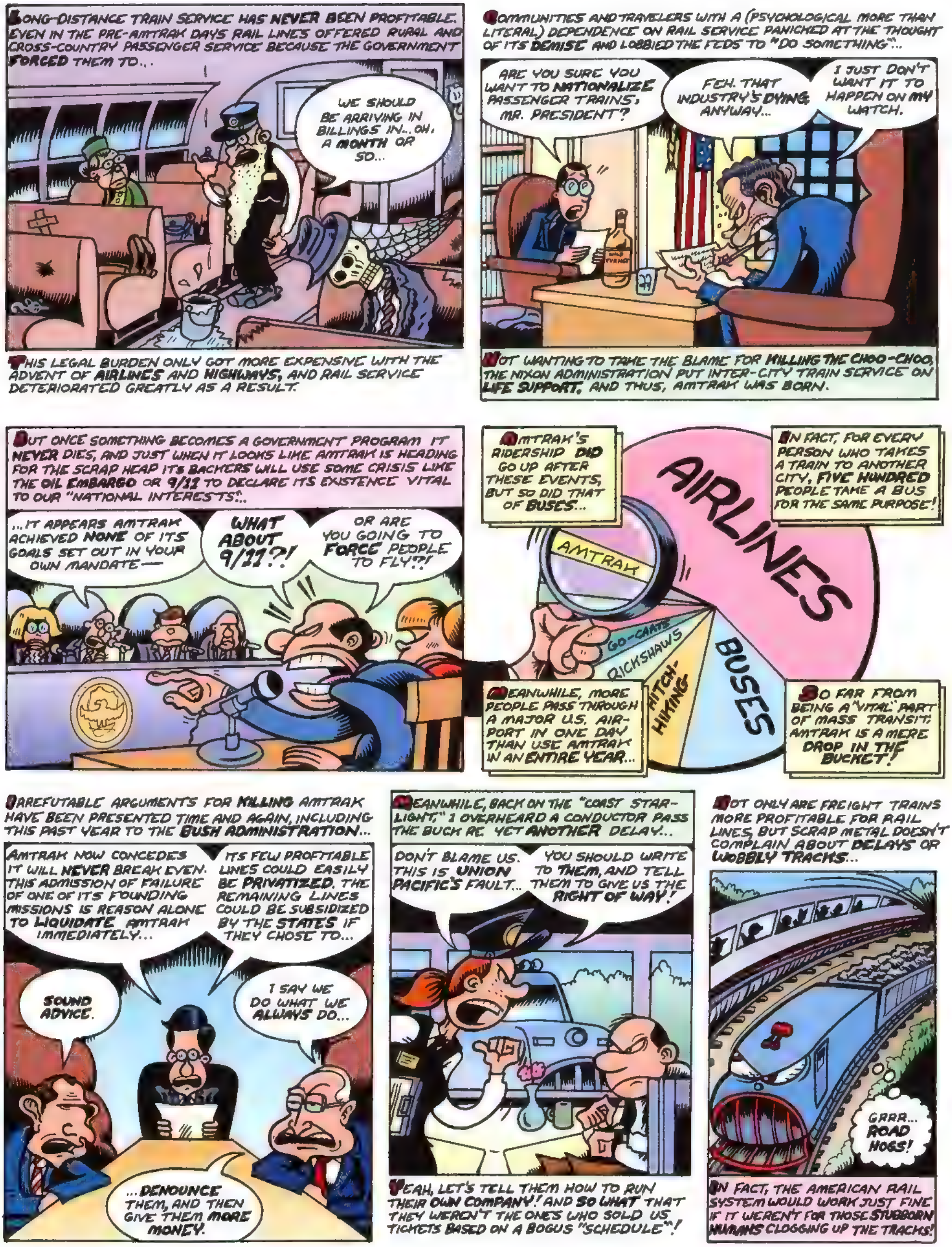

ONE OFT-CITED SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM IS PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF PROFESSIONAL SPORTS TEAMS, AS IN THE CASE OF THE GREEN BAY PACKERS...
N.F.L.
ALLOWING FANS TO BUY SHARES OF A TEAM SMACKS OF SOCIALISM...
AND IT MIGHT INTERFERE WITH OUR SHARED REVENUE SCHEME!
AN ARRANGEMENT THAT THE OTHER N.F.L OWNERS SELF-SERVINGLY BANNED IN 1961 (THOUGH LATER AN INCONSISTENT EXCEPTION WAS MADE FOR PUBLIC CORPORATIONS).
IN 1934, THE PACKERS ISSUED 5,000 SHARES OF STOCK TO KEEP THE TINY-MARKET FRANCHISE ALIVE. THESE SHARES ARE STILL MOSTLY IN THE HANDS OF DIE-HARD PACKERS FANS, PRACTICALLY ASSURING THE TEAM WILL NEVER MOVE...
RIP
(I WONDER WHO GRANDPA BEQUEATHED HIS PACKER SHARES TO).
GO PACKERS
(IT BETTER BE US!)
THESE SHAREHOLDERS TAKE NO DIVIDENDS (THOUGH THEY CAN SELL THEIR SHARES FOR A HUGE PROFIT). INSTEAD ALL PROFITS GO TO IMPROVING THE TEAM—WHICH THE PACKERS HAVE DONE WITH CONSIDERABLE SUCCESS FOR 70 YEARS.
HOWEVER, THE PACKERS' STADIUM WAS ORIGINALLY BUILT WITH GOVERNMENT FUNDS, AND IT WAS JUST REFURBISHED FOR NEARLY $300 MILLION AT TAXPAYERS' EXPENSE...
YOU WANT TO INCLUDE A MALL IN THE NEW STADIUM?
SHAREHOLDER
THE NEW LAMBEAU FIELD
IT'S CALLED AN "ATRIUM," AND IT'LL EARN YEAR-ROUND REVENUES FOR THE TEAM...
YEAR-ROUND REVENUES FOR YOU, YOU MEAN.
WHAT ARE YOU, A VIKINGS FAN?
TO VOTE AGAINST THIS REFURBISHMENT WOULD'VE BEEN CONSIDERED ALMOST UNPATRIOTIC IN THE STATE OF WISCONSIN, BUT THIS BLATANT ROBBING PETER TO PAY PAUL MEASURE ALSO GENERATED A LOT OF ILL WILL BETWEEN NEIGHBORS.
AMAZINGLY, THE OWNERS OF BASEBALL'S SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS AGREED TO PAY FOR A NEW STADIUM OUT OF THEIR OWN POCKETS AFTER THE VOTERS REJECTED THEIR REPEATED REQUESTS FOR PUBLIC SUBSIDIES...
THIS SURE IS A NICE BALLPARK.
YUP...
AND I SURE AM GLAD I VOTED AGAINST PAYING FOR IT.
PAF
THIS TURNED OUT TO BE A WISE INVESTMENT. NOT ONLY HAS THE TEAM BEEN POSTING PROFITS SINCE THE NEW STADIUM OPENED, BUT THE CITY THEY THREATENED TO MOVE TO, TAMPA, NOW HAS THE MOST DESPISED FACILITY IN THE MAJOR LEAGUES!
YOU'D THINK THIS WOULD'VE SET A NEW, PERMANENT EXAMPLE FOR THE REST OF THE COUNTRY. YET TEAM OWNERS NOW INSIST THAT THE GIANTS' SITUATION IS A FLUKE...
THE DOT-COM BOOM OF THE '90S IS WHAT MADE PRIVATE FINANCING POSSIBLE...
I DOUBT WE'LL SEE AN ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT LIKE THAT AGAIN ANY TIME SOON...
"DOT-COM BOOM"?
I THOUGHT HE OWNED A BUNCH OF GROCERY STORES!
GIANTS PRESIDENT AND SAFEWAY C.E.O. PETE MAGOWAN
INCLUDING THE GIANTS' OWNERS, WHO ECHO THE PARTY LINE THAT PUBLIC FINANCING FOR STATE-OF-THE-ART JOCK PALACES IS THE ONLY WAY A SMALL-MARKET TEAM CAN REMAIN "COMPETITIVE."
SO WHAT DEFINES AN "ACCEPTABLE" SPORTS FACILITY? ESPECIALLY WHEN PUNY, HOPELESSLY OUTDATED BALLPARKS LIKE WRIGLEY FIELD AND FENWAY PARK ARE THE MOST BELOVED IN BASEBALL AND SERVE AS HOME TO TWO OF THE LEAGUE'S MOST VALUABLE FRANCHISES...
MY LINE OF VISION IS BLOCKED, AND THESE BLEACHERS ARE GIVING ME SPLINTERS...
AND THE FIELD'S CONFIGURATION IS LUDICROUS. EVERY FLYBALL IS A HOME RUN...
I LOVE THIS PLACE!
MAYBE THAT'S WHAT MORE TEAMS SHOULD BUILD TO REMAIN COMPETITIVE AND PROFITABLE: UNDERSIZED, OBSOLETE STADIUMS AND ARENAS!


Amtrak Sucks
Traveling Soviet-Style Aboard America's $30,000,000,000.00 Nostalgia Toy!
By P. Bagge '05 (peterbagge@earthlink.net)
...CHICO, NEXT STOP! CHICO, CALIFORNIA...
CHICO?!? ACCORDING TO THE SCHEDULE WE SHOULD BE HALF-WAY THROUGH OREGON BY NOW!
WE WERE JUST PULLING INTO SAN JOSE WHEN WE WENT TO BED. WE'VE ONLY MOVED 200 MILES IN THE LAST EIGHT HOURS!
AT THIS RATE WE'RE SURE TO BE SPENDING ANOTHER SLEEPLESS NIGHT IN THIS RATTLING TIN CAN BEFORE WE GET HOME TO SEATTLE...
?!?
MAYBE EVEN TWO NIGHTS...
OH, MY ACHING HEAD...
CHICO
OUR INITIAL TRIP DOWN THE WEST COAST WAS SUPPOSED TO TAKE THIRTY-SIX HOURS, BUT WE PULLED INTO L.A. AT 3AM, SIX HOURS BEHIND SCHEDULE...
SOME "VIEW."
WE'VE BEEN STARING AT THAT PILE OF SCRAP METAL FOR AN HOUR!
UNION PACIFIC
THE "OBSERVATION DECK"
THE DELAYS WERE USUALLY BLAMED ON ONCOMING FREIGHT TRAINS, MOST OF WHICH WEREN'T MOVING OR NEVER EVEN MATERIALIZED.
OUR RETURN TRIP HAD EVEN MORE DELAYS —ONE OF WHICH WAS BLAMED ON A ROAD CREW WHOSE EQUIPMENT WAS BLOCKING THE TRACK...
?!? WHERE IS EVERYBODY?
DID THOSE TRACTORS MOVE THEMSELVES?
BUT WHEN WE PASSED BY THERE WAS NO CREW!



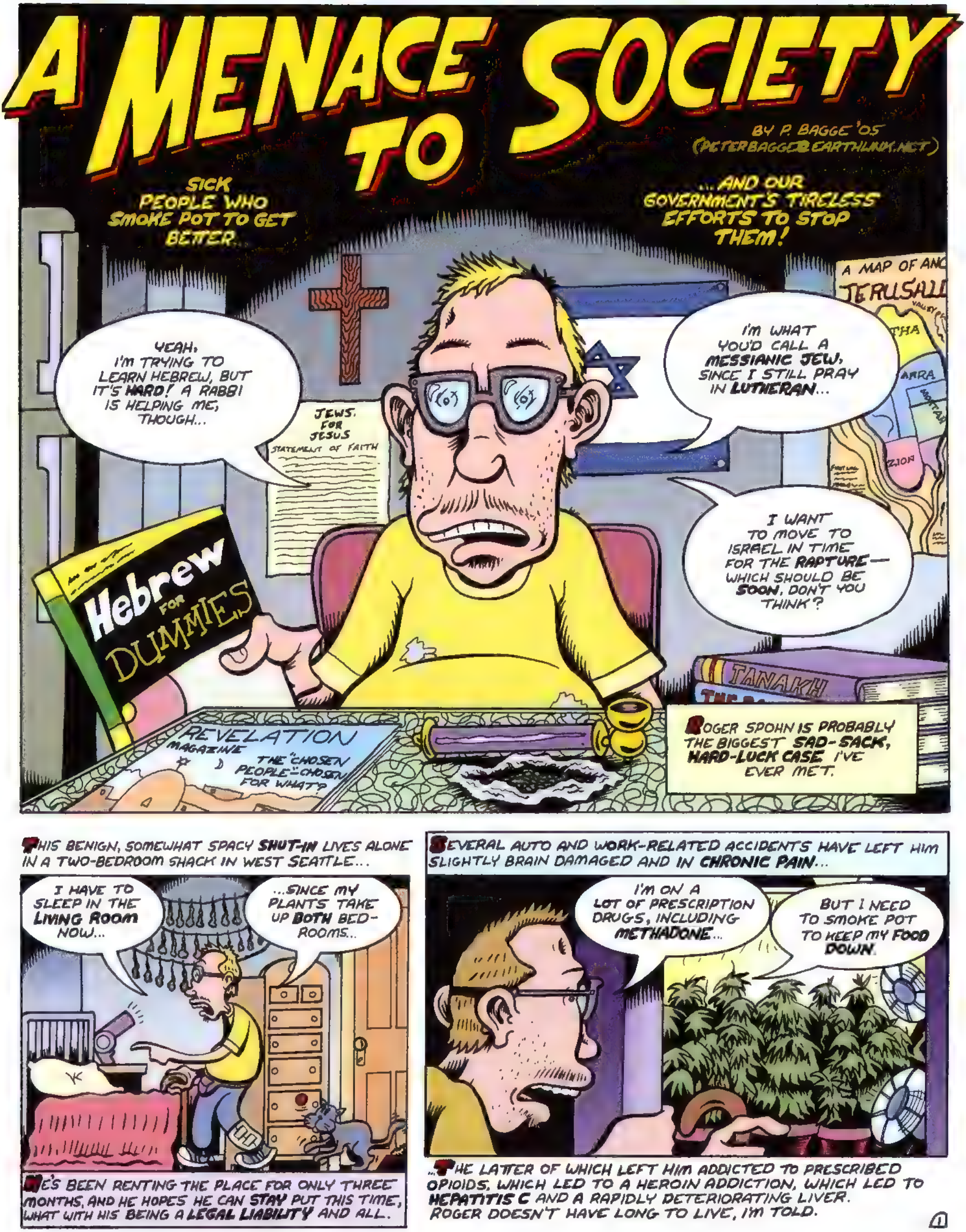
THESE ENDLESS DELAYS COMPOUNDED OTHER PROBLEMS, WHICH ADDED TO AMTRAK'S OWN OBLIGATIONS AND EXPENSES...
WE'RE GONNA MISS OUR CONNECTING TRAIN TO SPOKANE...
DON'T WORRY, WE HAVE A BUS WAITING FOR YOU AT KLAMATH FALLS...
ONLY YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO WAIT FOR SIX HOURS FOR THE DRIVER TO SHOW UP.
THEY ALSO MEANT MORE MEALS HAD TO BE SERVED THAN HAD BEEN PLANNED FOR...
EXCUSE ME — IS THERE A SAFEWAY NEARBY?
?
WHICH MEANT MORE UNSCHEDULED STOPS SO THE CHEF COULD RUN INTO TOWN TO BUY MORE FOOD!
AS THESE PROBLEMS MOUNTED, SOME OF THE CREW GOT A BIT DEFENSIVE...
WHAT TIME WILL WE BE PULLING INTO PORTLAND NOW?
10 P.M., JUST LIKE THE SCHEDULE SAYS.
BUT IT'S ALREADY 10:30...
I SAID 10 P.M.! CASE CLOSED!
OTHER CREWMEMBERS REMAINED AMIABLE, EVEN THOUGH (OR PERHAPS BECAUSE?) THEY SEEMED BORDERLINE RETARDED...
CAN ANYONE GUESS WHAT KIND OF WINE THIS IS?
IT TASTES LIKE A SAUVIGNON BLANC...
WRONG! IT'S A... "SAW-VIG-NON BLANK."
GOTCHA!
BUT, I— OH, NEVER MIND...
THESE DELAYS ALSO MEANT MORE "QUALITY TIME" WITH THE OTHER PASSENGERS, WHO WERE QUITE A STORY IN AND OF THEMSELVES:
...SO THEN MY METH-ADDICT SISTER ACCUSES ME OF MOLESTING HER! CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT SHIT?
OH DEAR. THAT'S A TOUGH BREAK ALL RIGHT.
ALL YOU NEED IN THEEZ VORLD EEZ LUFF. WHO NEEDS MONEY? NOT ME!
REALLY? HOW'D YOU GET ON THIS TRAIN, THEN?
NO WAY WAS SHE FROM VICTORIA, MINNESOTA! KNOW WHY? 'CUZ THERE'S NO SUCH PLACE! GET ME AN ATLAS AND I'LL PROVE IT!
JERRY SPRINGER LADY
I NEED A SMOKE!
SWEET OLD BIRD, UNTIL SHE STARTS DRINKING
EUROTRASH PHILOSOPHER HIPPIE
DESPERATE TO MAKE FRIENDS
THINKS EVERYONE'S A LIAR
CATATONIC MARINE CADET
LIMP BISKIT
AMTRAK LIKES TO PROMOTE THE COMMUNAL NATURE OF RIDING THE RAILS, BUT MAN, WHAT A "COMMUNITY"!

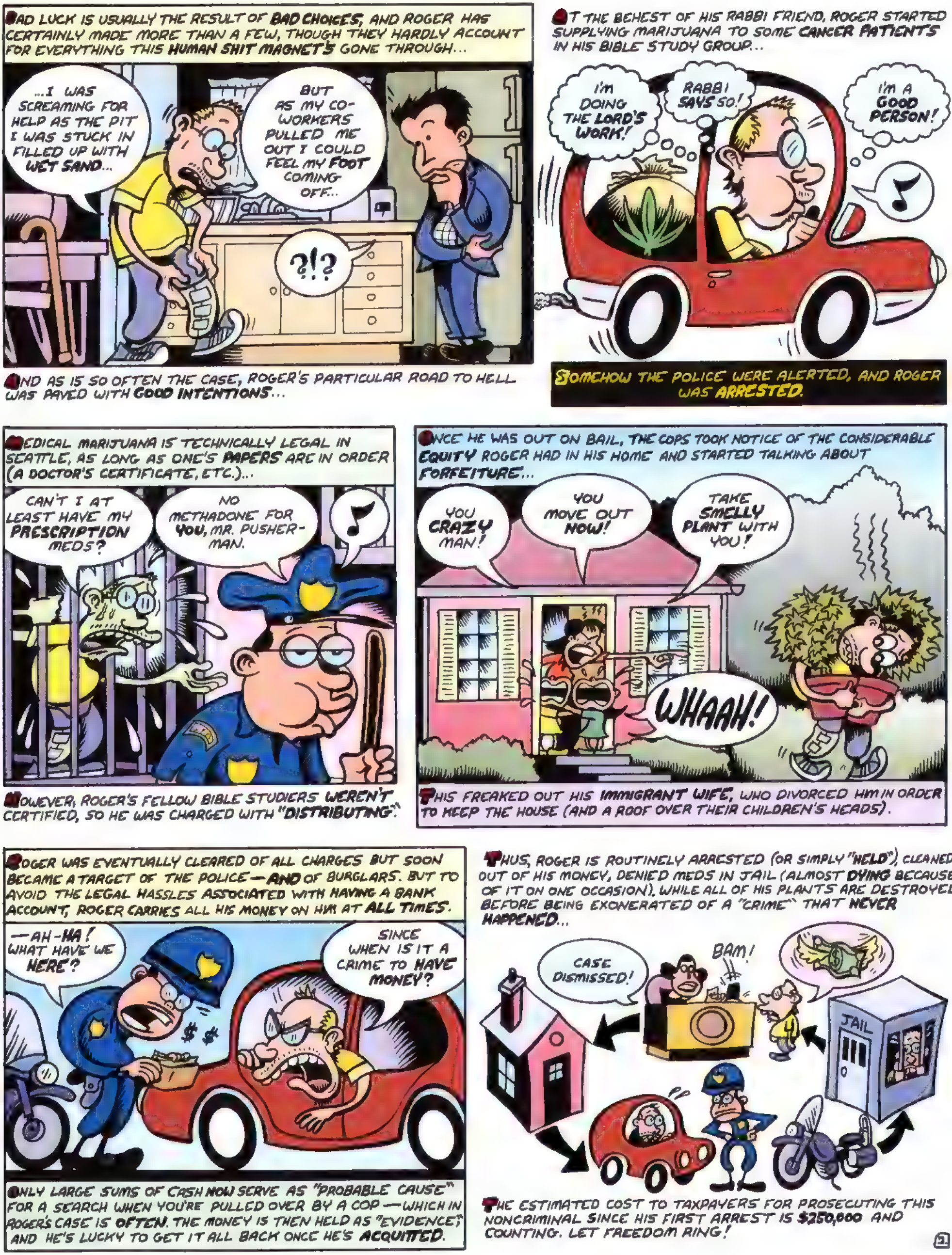

WHY WAS I ON THIS TOONERVILLE TROLLEY IN THE FIRST PLACE, YOU ASK? BECAUSE OF MY DAUGHTER'S EARS. THEY GIVE HER A LOT OF TROUBLE WHEN SHE FLIES, SO WE DECIDED TO TAKE THE "COAST STARLIGHT" TO CALIFORNIA INSTEAD...
BABY, I LOVE Y—
SCREECH!
THE TRAIN'S BRAKES
"HITCH" ON V.C.R.
BESIDES, AMTRAK'S WEB SITE MADE ITS FIRST CLASS SECTION SOUND LIKE A HOTEL ON WHEELS. THEY EVEN HAVE AN "ENTERTAINMENT CENTER"... OF SORTS.
AMTRAK'S DEFENDERS CLAIM THAT IT'S BECAUSE OF PEOPLE WHO CAN'T FLY THAT LONG-DISTANCE RAIL SERVICE IS A NECESSITY, SINCE BUSES DON'T HAVE SLEEPER CARS...
ZZZZZZZZZ...
STILL, MOST PASSENGERS RODE COACH FOR THE ENTIRE TRIP AND PROBABLY SLEPT AS WELL AS WE DID (AND FOR ONE-TENTH THE COST).
THE REAL REASON AMTRAK'S INTER-CITY SERVICE EXISTS IS SIMPLY TO APPEASE PEOPLE WHO HAVE A "THING" FOR TRAINS.
THERE GOES THE "ZEPHYR"...
RIGHT ON TIME FOR A CHANGE, TOO!
—OOH! A RUSTING COAL CHUTE!
I GOTTA TAKE A PICTURE!
SCHEDULE COLLECTION
IN FACT, THE FIRST CLASS-SECTION OF OUR TRAIN CONSISTED ALMOST ENTIRELY OF THESE RAILROAD "BUFFS."
THESE (MOSTLY OLDER WHITE MALE) BUFFS WILL FORGIVE AMTRAK ALMOST ANYTHING, AS THEY PRATTLE ON ENDLESSLY ABOUT THE "ROMANCE" OF RIDING THE RAILS...
ISN'T THIS ROMANTIC? I FEEL LIKE I'M IN AN OLD MOVIE!
AND SO WHAT IF WE'RE RUNNING LATE? I'M IN NO RUSH!
AND I'M LATE FOR MY DAUGHTER'S WEDDING, YOU SMUG RETIRED JERK!
THESE "RAILROADIANS" ADHERE TO ONE SIMPLE SOLUTION TO ALL OF AMTRAK'S WOES: MORE GOVERNMENT FUNDING.
WHOA! THESE TRACKS ARE IN BAD SHAPE...
IT'S NOTHING THAT MORE FEDERAL DOLLARS COULDN'T CURE...
—OOH! THERE GOES THE "SAN JOAQUIN"!
WOBBLE WOBBLE
APPARENTLY THE MEANING OF THE PHRASE "THROWING GOOD MONEY AFTER BAD" HAS NEVER SUNK IN WITH THESE OLD-TIMERS.
HERE'S MY SOLUTION: MAKE THESE TRAIN LOVERS PAY THE FULL COST OF TRAVELING LONG-DISTANCE BY RAIL, RATHER THAN MAKE TRAIN AVOIDERS (I.E.: 99% OF THE U.S. PUBLIC) FOOT MOST OF THE BILL.
I INSIST ON TAKING THE TRAIN FROM DISNEYLAND TO DISNEYWORLD...
AND I DEMAND THAT YOU PAY FOR TWO-THIRDS OF MY TICKET PRICE! *
ANAHEIM
* ROUGHLY 70% OF THE PER PASSENGER COST BETWEEN L.A. AND ORLANDO IS COVERED BY TAXPAYERS.
THAT WAY WE'LL FIND OUT HOW MUCH THESE NOSTALGIC OLD COOTS REALLY LOVE THEIR CHOO-CHOO TRAINS!
3.


LONG-DISTANCE TRAIN SERVICE HAS NEVER BEEN PROFITABLE. EVEN IN THE PRE-AMTRAK DAYS RAIL LINES OFFERED RURAL AND CROSS-COUNTRY PASSENGER SERVICE BECAUSE THE GOVERNMENT FORCED THEM TO...
WE SHOULD BE ARRIVING IN BILLINGS IN... OH, A MONTH OR SO...
THIS LEGAL BURDEN ONLY GOT MORE EXPENSIVE WITH THE ADVENT OF AIRLINES AND HIGHWAYS, AND RAIL SERVICE DETERIORATED GREATLY AS A RESULT.
COMMUNITIES AND TRAVELERS WITH A (PSYCHOLOGICAL MORE THAN LITERAL) DEPENDENCE ON RAIL SERVICE PANICKED AT THE THOUGHT OF ITS DEMISE AND LOBBIED THE FEDS TO "DO SOMETHING"...
ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO NATIONALIZE PASSENGER TRAINS, MR. PRESIDENT?
FEH. THAT INDUSTRY'S DYING ANYWAY...
I JUST DON'T WANT IT TO HAPPEN ON MY WATCH.
NOT WANTING TO TAKE THE BLAME FOR KILLING THE CHOO-CHOO, THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION PUT INTER-CITY TRAIN SERVICE ON LIFE SUPPORT, AND THUS, AMTRAK WAS BORN.
BUT ONCE SOMETHING BECOMES A GOVERNMENT PROGRAM IT NEVER DIES, AND JUST WHEN IT LOOKS LIKE AMTRAK IS HEADING FOR THE SCRAP HEAP ITS BACKERS WILL USE SOME CRISIS LIKE THE OIL EMBARGO OR 9/11 TO DECLARE ITS EXISTENCE VITAL TO OUR "NATIONAL INTERESTS"...
...IT APPEARS AMTRAK ACHIEVED NONE OF ITS GOALS SET OUT IN YOUR OWN MANDATE—
WHAT ABOUT 9/11?!
OR ARE YOU GOING TO FORCE PEOPLE TO FLY?!
AMTRAK'S RIDERSHIP DID GO UP AFTER THESE EVENTS, BUT SO DID THAT OF BUSES...
IN FACT, FOR EVERY PERSON WHO TAKES A TRAIN TO ANOTHER CITY, FIVE HUNDRED PEOPLE TAKE A BUS FOR THE SAME PURPOSE!
AIRLINES
AMTRAK
GO-CARTS
RICKSHAWS
HITCH-HIKING
BUSES
MEANWHILE, MORE PEOPLE PASS THROUGH A MAJOR U.S. AIRPORT IN ONE DAY THAN USE AMTRAK IN AN ENTIRE YEAR...
SO FAR FROM BEING A "VITAL" PART OF MASS TRANSIT, AMTRAK IS A MERE DROP IN THE BUCKET!
IRREFUTABLE ARGUMENTS FOR KILLING AMTRAK HAVE BEEN PRESENTED TIME AND AGAIN, INCLUDING THIS PAST YEAR TO THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION...
AMTRAK NOW CONCEDES IT WILL NEVER BREAK EVEN. THIS ADMISSION OF FAILURE OF ONE OF ITS FOUNDING MISSIONS IS REASON ALONE TO LIQUIDATE AMTRAK IMMEDIATELY...
ITS FEW PROFITABLE LINES COULD EASILY BE PRIVATIZED. THE REMAINING LINES COULD BE SUBSIDIZED BY THE STATES IF THEY CHOSE TO...
SOUND ADVICE.
I SAY WE DO WHAT WE ALWAYS DO...
...DENOUNCE THEM, AND THEN GIVE THEM MORE MONEY.
MEANWHILE, BACK ON THE "COAST STARLIGHT," I OVERHEARD A CONDUCTOR PASS THE BUCK RE YET ANOTHER DELAY...
DON'T BLAME US. THIS IS UNION PACIFIC'S FAULT...
YOU SHOULD WRITE TO THEM, AND TELL THEM TO GIVE US THE RIGHT OF WAY!
YEAH, LET'S TELL THEM HOW TO RUN THEIR OWN COMPANY! AND SO WHAT THAT THEY WEREN'T THE ONES WHO SOLD US TICKETS BASED ON A BOGUS "SCHEDULE"!
NOT ONLY ARE FREIGHT TRAINS MORE PROFITABLE FOR RAIL LINES, BUT SCRAP METAL DOESN'T COMPLAIN ABOUT DELAYS OR WOBBLY TRACKS...
GRRR... ROAD HOGS!
IN FACT, THE AMERICAN RAIL SYSTEM WOULD WORK JUST FINE IF IT WEREN'T FOR THOSE STUBBORN HUMANS CLOGGING UP THE TRACKS!

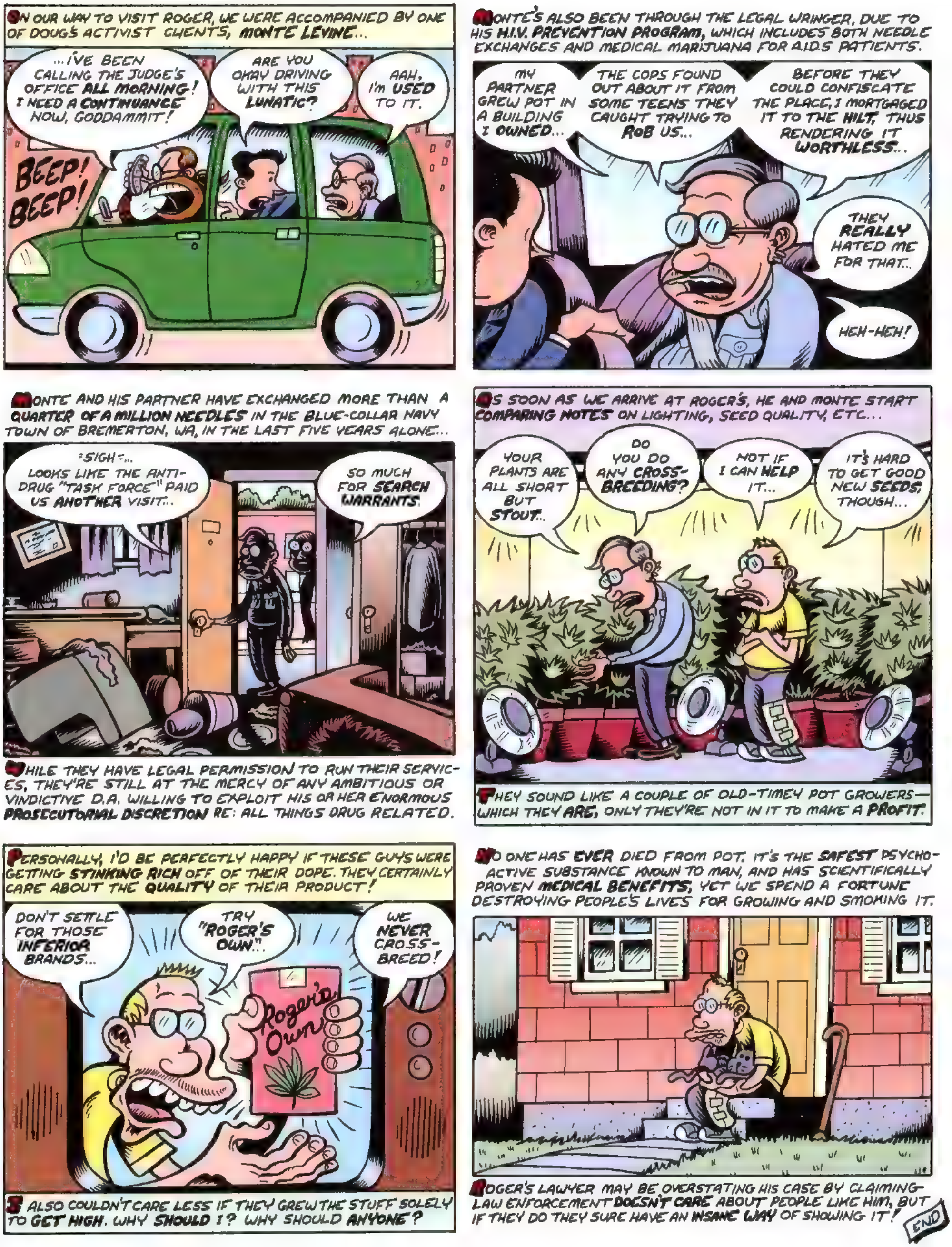
STUPID
TRAGEDY

GAMEBOT
P. BAGGE '02

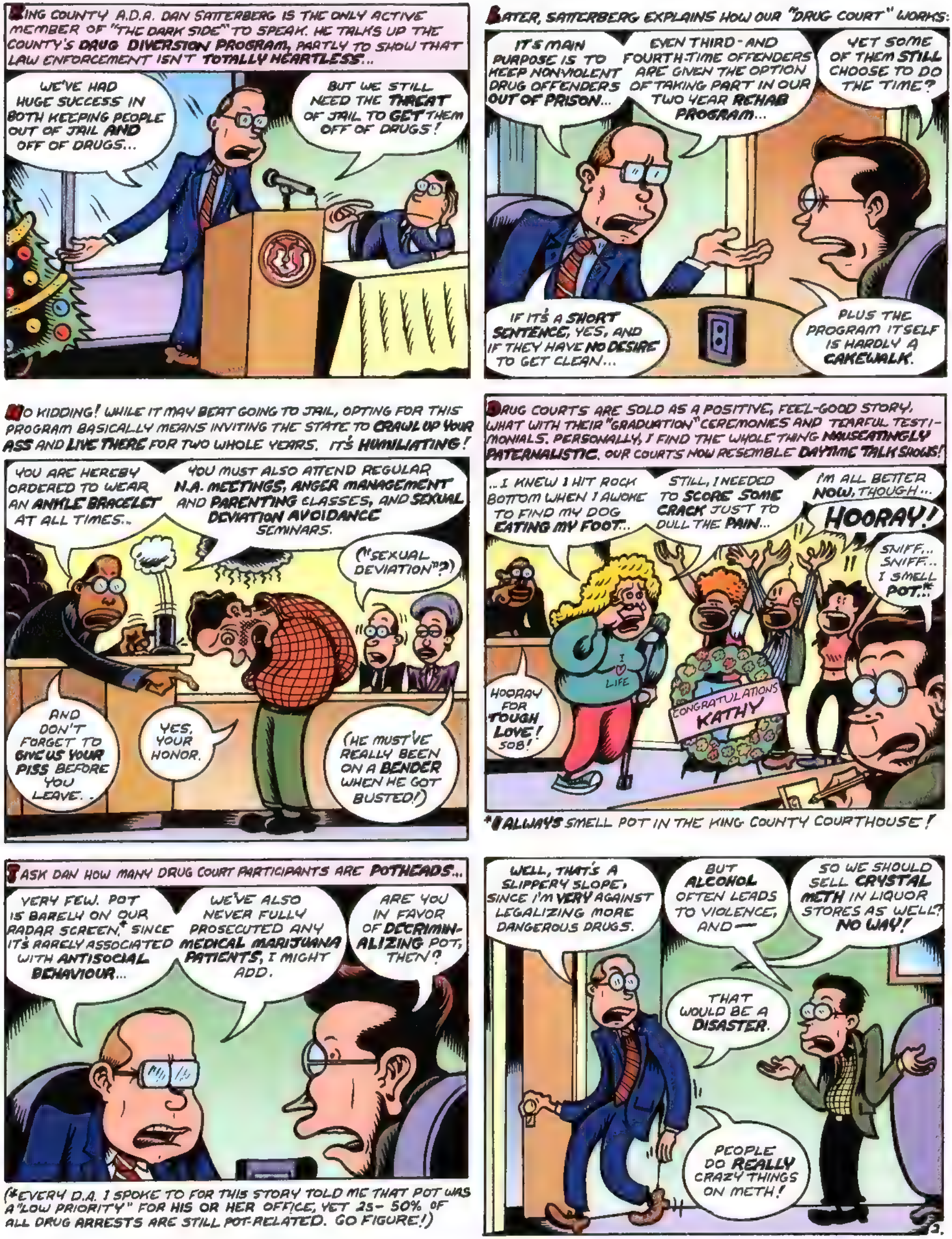

A MENACE TO SOCIETY
BY P. BAGGE '05 (PETERBAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET)
SICK PEOPLE WHO SMOKE POT TO GET BETTER
... AND OUR GOVERNMENT'S TIRELESS EFFORTS TO STOP THEM!
YEAH, I'M TRYING TO LEARN HEBREW, BUT IT'S HARD! A RABBI IS HELPING ME, THOUGH...
I'M WHAT YOU'D CALL A MESSIANIC JEW, SINCE I STILL PRAY IN LUTHERAN...
I WANT TO MOVE TO ISRAEL IN TIME FOR THE RAPTURE— WHICH SHOULD BE SOON, DON'T YOU THINK?
JEWS FOR JESUS STATEMENT OF FAITH
Hebrew FOR DUMMIES
TANAKH
REVELATION MAGAZINE
THE "CHOSEN PEOPLE"—CHOSEN FOR WHAT?
ROGER SPOHN IS PROBABLY THE BIGGEST SAD-SACK, HARD-LUCK CASE I'VE EVER MET.
THIS BENIGN, SOMEWHAT SPACY SHUT-IN LIVES ALONE IN A TWO-BEDROOM SHACK IN WEST SEATTLE...
I HAVE TO SLEEP IN THE LIVING ROOM NOW...
...SINCE MY PLANTS TAKE UP BOTH BED-ROOMS...
HE'S BEEN RENTING THE PLACE FOR ONLY THREE MONTHS, AND HE HOPES HE CAN STAY PUT THIS TIME, WHAT WITH HIS BEING A LEGAL LIABILITY AND ALL.
SEVERAL AUTO AND WORK-RELATED ACCIDENTS HAVE LEFT HIM SLIGHTLY BRAIN DAMAGED AND IN CHRONIC PAIN...
I'M ON A LOT OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS, INCLUDING METHADONE...
BUT I NEED TO SMOKE POT TO KEEP MY FOOD DOWN.
...THE LATTER OF WHICH LEFT HIM ADDICTED TO PRESCRIBED OPIOIDS, WHICH LED TO A HEROIN ADDICTION, WHICH LED TO HEPATITIS C AND A RAPIDLY DETERIORATING LIVER. ROGER DOESN'T HAVE LONG TO LIVE, I'M TOLD.
1

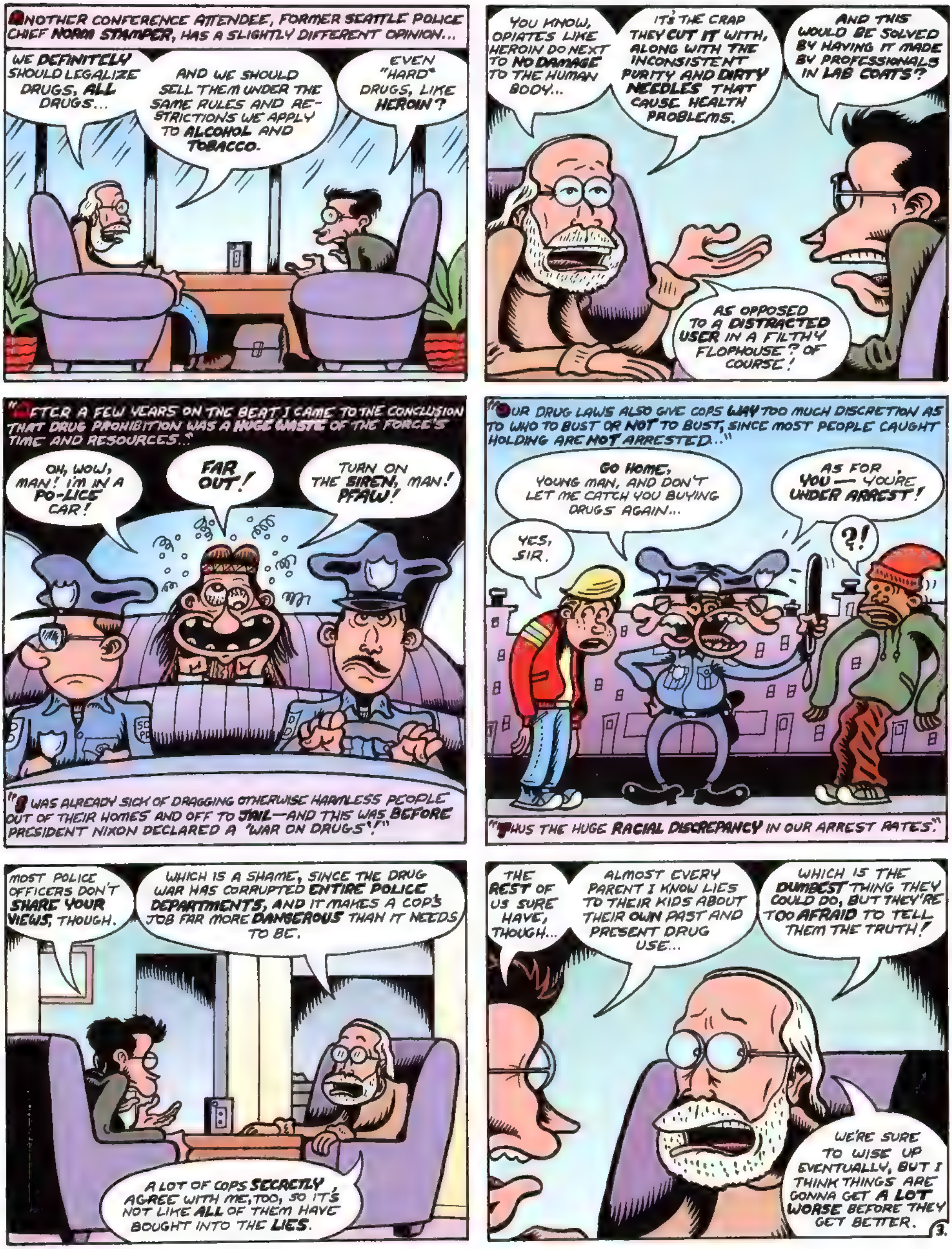

BAD LUCK IS USUALLY THE RESULT OF BAD CHOICES, AND ROGER HAS CERTAINLY MADE MORE THAN A FEW, THOUGH THEY HARDLY ACCOUNT FOR EVERYTHING THIS HUMAN SHIT MAGNET'S GONE THROUGH...
...I WAS SCREAMING FOR HELP AS THE PIT I WAS STUCK IN FILLED UP WITH WET SAND...
BUT AS MY CO-WORKERS PULLED ME OUT I COULD FEEL MY FOOT COMING OFF...
?!?
AND AS IS SO OFTEN THE CASE, ROGER'S PARTICULAR ROAD TO HELL WAS PAVED WITH GOOD INTENTIONS...
AT THE BEHEST OF HIS RABBI FRIEND, ROGER STARTED SUPPLYING MARIJUANA TO SOME CANCER PATIENTS IN HIS BIBLE STUDY GROUP...
I'M DOING THE LORD'S WORK!
RABBI SAYS SO!
I'M A GOOD PERSON!
SOMEHOW THE POLICE WERE ALERTED, AND ROGER WAS ARRESTED.
MEDICAL MARIJUANA IS TECHNICALLY LEGAL IN SEATTLE, AS LONG AS ONE'S PAPERS ARE IN ORDER (A DOCTOR'S CERTIFICATE, ETC.)...
CAN'T I AT LEAST HAVE MY PRESCRIPTION MEDS?
NO METHADONE FOR YOU, MR. PUSHER-MAN.
HOWEVER, ROGER'S FELLOW BIBLE STUDIERS WEREN'T CERTIFIED, SO HE WAS CHARGED WITH "DISTRIBUTING."
ONCE HE WAS OUT ON BAIL, THE COPS TOOK NOTICE OF THE CONSIDERABLE EQUITY ROGER HAD IN HIS HOME AND STARTED TALKING ABOUT FORFEITURE...
YOU CRAZY MAN!
YOU MOVE OUT NOW!
TAKE SMELLY PLANT WITH YOU!
WHAAH!
THIS FREAKED OUT HIS IMMIGRANT WIFE, WHO DIVORCED HIM IN ORDER TO KEEP THE HOUSE (AND A ROOF OVER THEIR CHILDREN'S HEADS).
ROGER WAS EVENTUALLY CLEARED OF ALL CHARGES BUT SOON BECAME A TARGET OF THE POLICE — AND OF BURGLARS. BUT TO AVOID THE LEGAL HASSLES ASSOCIATED WITH HAVING A BANK ACCOUNT, ROGER CARRIES ALL HIS MONEY ON HIM AT ALL TIMES.
—AH-HA! WHAT HAVE WE HERE?
SINCE WHEN IS IT A CRIME TO HAVE MONEY?
ONLY LARGE SUMS OF CASH NOW SERVE AS "PROBABLE CAUSE" FOR A SEARCH WHEN YOU'RE PULLED OVER BY A COP — WHICH IN ROGER'S CASE IS OFTEN. THE MONEY IS THEN HELD AS "EVIDENCE," AND HE'S LUCKY TO GET IT ALL BACK ONCE HE'S ACQUITTED.
THUS, ROGER IS ROUTINELY ARRESTED (OR SIMPLY "HELD"), CLEANED OUT OF HIS MONEY, DENIED MEDS IN JAIL (ALMOST DYING BECAUSE OF IT ON ONE OCCASION), WHILE ALL OF HIS PLANTS ARE DESTROYED, BEFORE BEING EXONERATED OF A "CRIME" THAT NEVER HAPPENED...
CASE DISMISSED!
BAM!
JAIL
THE ESTIMATED COST TO TAXPAYERS FOR PROSECUTING THIS NONCRIMINAL SINCE HIS FIRST ARREST IS $250,000 AND COUNTING. LET FREEDOM RING!
2

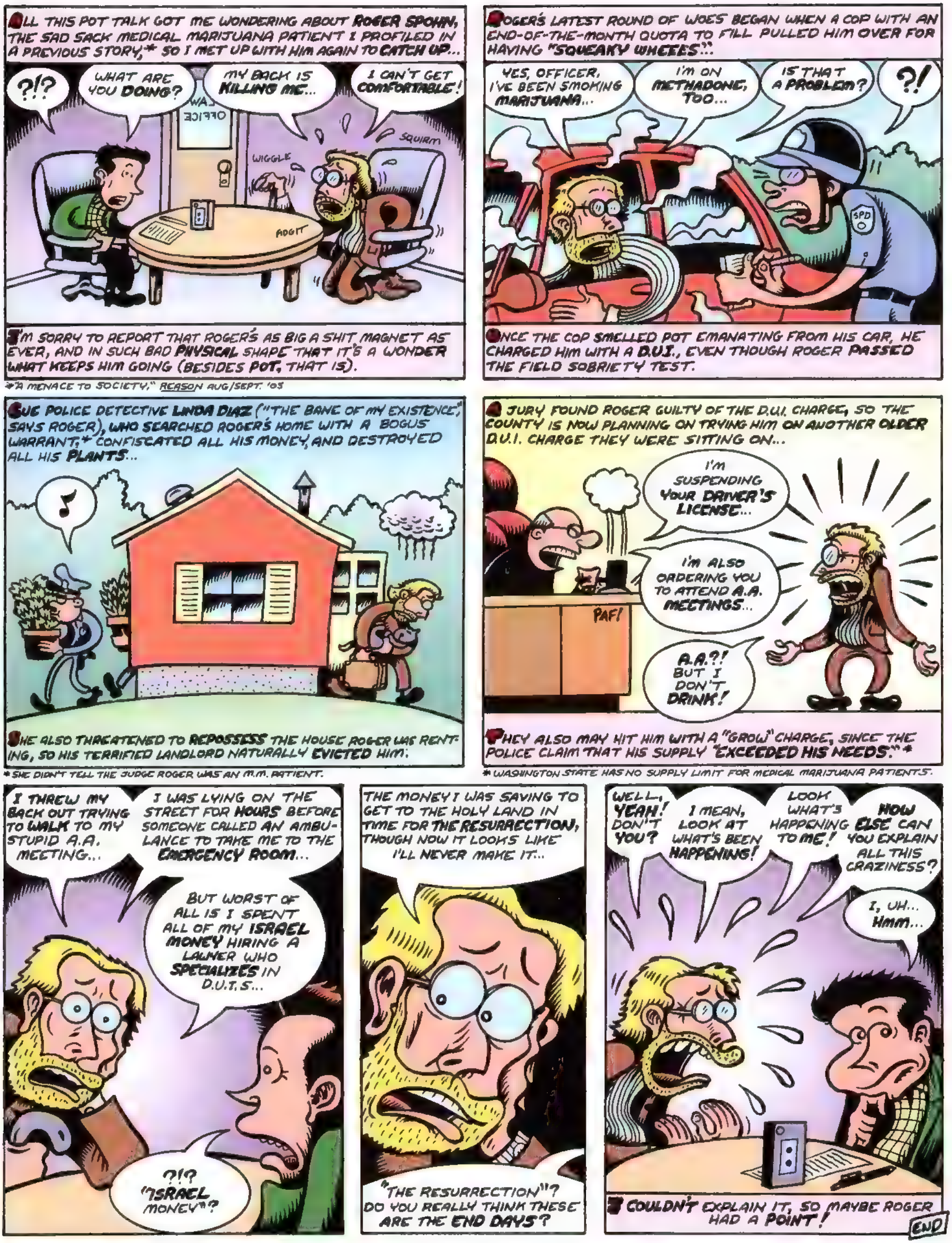
DOUGLAS HYATT IS ROGER'S LAWYER. HE'S AN IDEALISTIC, PERPETUALLY OVERWORKED CHAMPION OF SEEMINGLY LOST CAUSES...
THIS SO-CALLED "WAR ON DRUGS" HAS TURNED OUR COUNTRY INTO A POLICE STATE...
I SWEAR, I'M GONNA MOVE TO CANADA IF THINGS KEEP—
—HEY! I'VE GOT THE RIGHT OF WAY, ASSHOLE!
HONK! HONK! HONK!
DOUG IS FULL OF RAGE, DIRECTED BOTH AT OTHER DRIVERS AND AT WHAT THE DRUG WAR'S DOING TO OUR CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM.
DOUG INTRODUCED ME TO A FEW MEDICAL MARIJUANA ACTIVISTS, WHO ALL HAD PLENTY OF GOVERNMENT-OUT-OF-CONTROL TALES TO TELL...
THE STATE KEEPS ISSUING WARNINGS OF THIS SUPPOSEDLY HIGH-POWERED "B.C. BUD" COMING DOWN FROM CANADA, ONLY THERE'S NO SUCH THING...
I WISH IT WAS REAL, SINCE THAT WOULD MEAN OUR PATIENTS WOULDN'T HAVE TO SMOKE AS MUCH!
HUH.
I STARTED TO ASK THEM ABOUT THE DISCONNECT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT'S AND THE PUBLIC'S RESPECTIVE ATTITUDES TOWARD POT, BUT DOUG IMMEDIATELY CUT ME OFF...
"DISCONNECT"?! THAT WORD SUGGESTS THE GOVERMENT EVEN CARES HOW THE PUBLIC FEELS ABOUT THE SUBJECT!
WE NOW LIVE IN A SOFT TOTALITARIAN STATE! OR HAVEN'T YOU NOTICED?
THE DRUG WAR IS A SELF-PERPETUATING MONSTER, THANKS TO THE HUGE FINANCIAL INCENTIVES THAT KEEP IT GOING...
THE FEDS EVEN LOAN OUT ARMY TANKS TO LOCAL COPS TO BUST UNARMED GROWERS WITH!
WHAT COUNTY SHERIFF CAN RESIST THAT KIND OF MISMATCH IN FIREPOWER?
BUT THERE MUST BE SOME PROSECUTORS WHO ARE TROUBLED BY ALL THIS...
JESUS, YOU WATCH TOO MUCH "LAW AND ORDER".
IF THEY GAVE A CRAP ABOUT THE CONSTITUTION THEY WOULDN'T BE SITTING IDLY BY WHILE THE FEDS SLOWLY TAKE OVER THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM...
LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT HAS SOLD THEIR SOULS TO THE D.E.A.!
STILL, THERE MUST BE A D.A. SOMEWHERE WHO—
YOU'RE ASSUMING PROSECUTORS ARE JUST PLAIN FOLKS LIKE YOU 'N' ME. THEY'RE NOT.
THEY'RE TOO BLINDED BY POWER AND AMBITION TO WORRY ABOUT THE ENORMOUS DAMAGE THEY'RE CAUSING...
THEY DON'T GIVE A FLYING FUCK ABOUT THE PEOPLE THEY ALLEGEDLY "SERVE."
NOTE TO SELF: TALK TO PROSECUTORS FOR A FUTURE REASON FEATURE.
3.


ON OUR WAY TO VISIT ROGER, WE WERE ACCOMPANIED BY ONE OF DOUG'S ACTIVIST CLIENTS, MONTE LEVINE...
...I'VE BEEN CALLING THE JUDGE'S OFFICE ALL MORNING! I NEED A CONTINUANCE NOW, GODDAMMIT!
ARE YOU OKAY DRIVING WITH THIS LUNATIC?
AAH, I'M USED TO IT.
BEEP! BEEP!
MONTE'S ALSO BEEN THROUGH THE LEGAL WRINGER, DUE TO HIS H.I.V. PREVENTION PROGRAM, WHICH INCLUDES BOTH NEEDLE EXCHANGES AND MEDICAL MARIJUANA FOR A.I.D.S PATIENTS.
MY PARTNER GREW POT IN A BUILDING I OWNED...
THE COPS FOUND OUT ABOUT IT FROM SOME TEENS THEY CAUGHT TRYING TO ROB US...
BEFORE THEY COULD CONFISCATE THE PLACE, I MORTGAGED IT TO THE HILT, THUS RENDERING IT WORTHLESS...
THEY REALLY HATED ME FOR THAT...
HEH-HEH!
MONTE AND HIS PARTNER HAVE EXCHANGED MORE THAN A QUARTER OF A MILLION NEEDLES IN THE BLUE-COLLAR NAVY TOWN OF BREMERTON, WA, IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS ALONE...
SIGH... LOOKS LIKE THE ANTI-DRUG "TASK FORCE" PAID US ANOTHER VISIT...
SO MUCH FOR SEARCH WARRANTS.
WHILE THEY HAVE LEGAL PERMISSION TO RUN THEIR SERVICES, THEY'RE STILL AT THE MERCY OF ANY AMBITIOUS OR VINDICTIVE D.A. WILLING TO EXPLOIT HIS OR HER ENORMOUS PROSECUTORIAL DISCRETION RE: ALL THINGS DRUG RELATED.
AS SOON AS WE ARRIVE AT ROGER'S, HE AND MONTE START COMPARING NOTES ON LIGHTING, SEED QUALITY, ETC...
YOUR PLANTS ARE ALL SHORT BUT STOUT...
DO YOU DO ANY CROSS-BREEDING?
NOT IF I CAN HELP IT...
IT'S HARD TO GET GOOD NEW SEEDS, THOUGH...
THEY SOUND LIKE A COUPLE OF OLD-TIMEY POT GROWERS— WHICH THEY ARE, ONLY THEY'RE NOT IN IT TO MAKE A PROFIT.
PERSONALLY, I'D BE PERFECTLY HAPPY IF THESE GUYS WERE GETTING STINKING RICH OFF OF THEIR DOPE. THEY CERTAINLY CARE ABOUT THE QUALITY OF THEIR PRODUCT!
DON'T SETTLE FOR THOSE INFERIOR BRANDS...
TRY "ROGER'S OWN"...
WE NEVER CROSS-BREED!
Roger's Own
I ALSO COULDN'T CARE LESS IF THEY GREW THE STUFF SOLELY TO GET HIGH. WHY SHOULD I? WHY SHOULD ANYONE?
NO ONE HAS EVER DIED FROM POT. IT'S THE SAFEST PSYCHO-ACTIVE SUBSTANCE KNOWN TO MAN, AND HAS SCIENTIFICALLY PROVEN MEDICAL BENEFITS, YET WE SPEND A FORTUNE DESTROYING PEOPLE'S LIVES FOR GROWING AND SMOKING IT.
ROGER'S LAWYER MAY BE OVERSTATING HIS CASE BY CLAIMING LAW ENFORCEMENT DOESN'T CARE ABOUT PEOPLE LIKE HIM, BUT IF THEY DO THEY SURE HAVE AN INSANE WAY OF SHOWING IT!
END

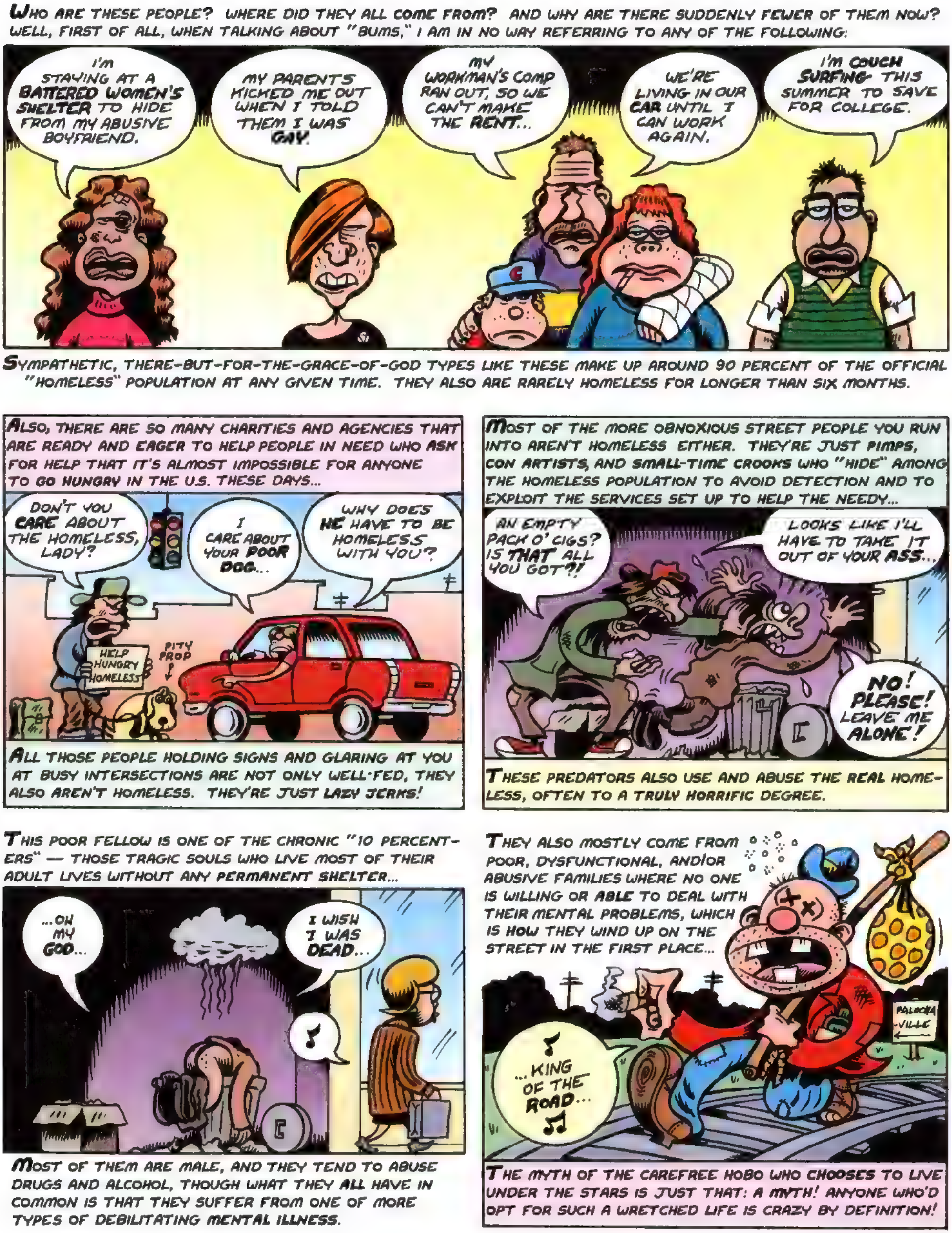
THE BEAST THAT WILL NOT DIE
TRYING TO STOP AMERICA'S SEEMINGLY UNSTOPPABLE "WAR ON DRUGS"
BY P. BAGGE (PETERBAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET)
SEATTLE, 12/3/05: THE KING COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION'S "EXIT STRATEGY FOR THE WAR ON DRUGS" CONFERENCE IS IN FULL SWING...
AN IMPRESSIVE LINEUP OF GUEST SPEAKERS ARE ALL MAKING WELL-REASONED ARGUMENTS AGAINST DRUG PROHIBITION FROM THEIR VARIOUS LEGAL, MEDICAL, ECONOMIC AND MORAL POINTS OF VIEW...
IN FACT, EVERYONE HERE IS IN SUCH FULL AGREEMENT THAT THE DRUG WAR IS FUCKED THAT THE PLACE IS STARTING TO SOUND LIKE AN ECHO CHAMBER...
PROHIBITIONISTS SAY THAT LEGALIZING DRUGS WOULD BE AN UNWORKABLE PROSPECT, BUT WE ALREADY HAVE A WORKING MODEL THAT PROVES THEM WRONG: NAMELY OUR CURRENT LIQUOR LAWS!
KCBA
APPLAUSE
E. NADELMANN
RED LION HOTELS
S. ZIEGLER
S. TREE
D. SMALL
ONE NOTE OF DISCORD COMES FROM THE TWO BLACK SPEAKERS, CURIOUSLY, BOTH OF WHOM EXPRESS DISDAIN FOR THE MANY "LIBERTARIAN" SOLUTIONS BEING PROPOSED...
THE ECONOMY OF MANY INNER CITIES IS LARGELY BASED ON THE ILLEGAL DRUG TRADE...
?
ONE OF THEM, CLIFF THORNTON OF EFFICACY, MAKES THIS STARTLING STATEMENT, FOLLOWED BY AN EQUALLY STARTLING SOLUTION...
SO WE'D BETTER BE READY TO OFFER MASSIVE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE IF WE EVER LEGALIZE DRUGS!
NOT SURPRISINGLY, NO ONE REPRESENTING THE FEDS ARE TAKING PART IN THIS EVENT (THEY NEVER DO), OTHER THAN A PARTISAN FORMER FEDERAL PROSECUTOR, WHO WAXED NOSTALGIC FOR "THE GOOD OLD DAYS" WHEN JANET RENO WAS IN CHARGE...
...OUR BEST HOPE IS TO VOTE THE CURRENT ADMINISTRATION OUT OF OFFICE...
ONLY THEN WILL WE EVER SEE REAL CHANGE!
OH, BROTHER...
JUDGING FROM ALL THE EYE ROLLING HER COMMENTS ELICITS, I DOUBT MANY OF THE PEOPLE PRESENT SHARE HER FAITH IN THE DEMOCRATS ENDING THE DRUG WAR.
1

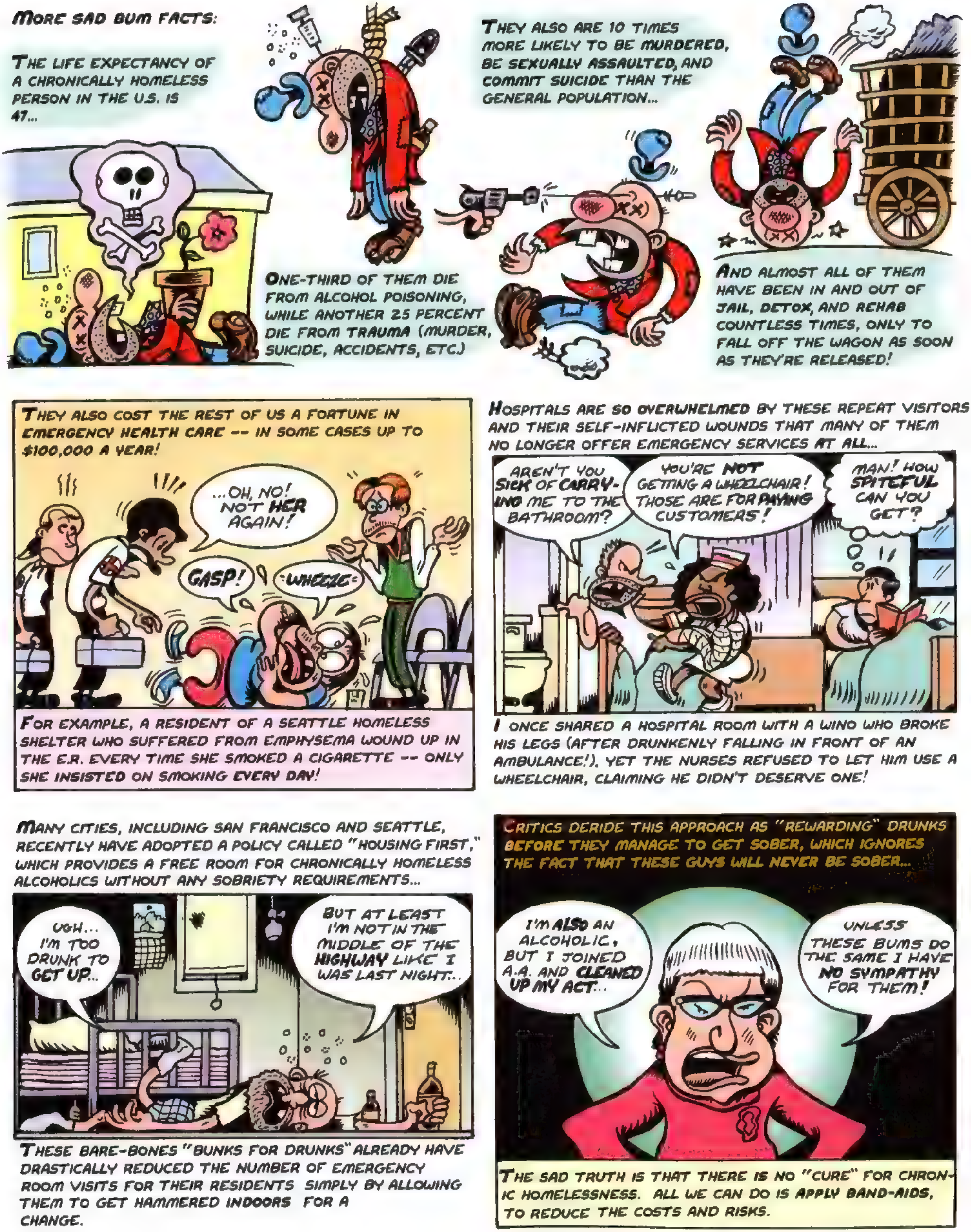

KING COUNTY A.D.A. DAN SATTERBERG IS THE ONLY ACTIVE MEMBER OF "THE DARK SIDE" TO SPEAK. HE TALKS UP THE COUNTY'S DRUG DIVERSION PROGRAM, PARTLY TO SHOW THAT LAW ENFORCEMENT ISN'T TOTALLY HEARTLESS...
WE'VE HAD HUGE SUCCESS IN BOTH KEEPING PEOPLE OUT OF JAIL AND OFF OF DRUGS...
BUT WE STILL NEED THE THREAT OF JAIL TO GET THEM OFF OF DRUGS!
LATER, SATTERBERG EXPLAINS HOW OUR "DRUG COURT" WORKS:
IT'S MAIN PURPOSE IS TO KEEP NONVIOLENT DRUG OFFENDERS OUT OF PRISON...
EVEN THIRD- AND FOURTH-TIME OFFENDERS ARE GIVEN THE OPTION OF TAKING PART IN OUR TWO YEAR REHAB PROGRAM...
YET SOME OF THEM STILL CHOOSE TO DO THE TIME?
IF IT'S A SHORT SENTENCE, YES, AND IF THEY HAVE NO DESIRE TO GET CLEAN...
PLUS THE PROGRAM ITSELF IS HARDLY A CAKEWALK.
NO KIDDING! WHILE IT MAY BEAT GOING TO JAIL, OPTING FOR THIS PROGRAM BASICALLY MEANS INVITING THE STATE TO CRAWL UP YOUR ASS AND LIVE THERE FOR TWO WHOLE YEARS. IT'S HUMILIATING!
YOU ARE HEREBY ORDERED TO WEAR AN ANKLE BRACELET AT ALL TIMES..
YOU MUST ALSO ATTEND REGULAR N.A. MEETINGS, ANGER MANAGEMENT AND PARENTING CLASSES, AND SEXUAL DEVIATION AVOIDANCE SEMINARS.
("SEXUAL DEVIATION"?)
AND DON'T FORGET TO GIVE US YOUR PISS BEFORE YOU LEAVE..
YES, YOUR HONOR.
(HE MUST'VE REALLY BEEN ON A BENDER WHEN HE GOT BUSTED!)
DRUG COURTS ARE SOLD AS A POSITIVE, FEEL-GOOD STORY, WHAT WITH THEIR "GRADUATION" CEREMONIES AND TEARFUL TESTIMONIALS. PERSONALLY, I FIND THE WHOLE THING NAUSEATINGLY PATERNALISTIC. OUR COURTS NOW RESEMBLE DAYTIME TALK SHOWS!
...I KNEW I HIT ROCK BOTTOM WHEN I AWOKE TO FIND MY DOG EATING MY FOOT...
STILL, I NEEDED TO SCORE SOME CRACK JUST TO DULL THE PAIN...
I'M ALL BETTER NOW, THOUGH...
HOORAY!
SNIFF... SNIFF... I SMELL POT...*
I ♥ LIFE
HOORAY FOR TOUGH LOVE! SOB!
CONGRATULATIONS KATHY
*I ALWAYS SMELL POT IN THE KING COUNTY COURTHOUSE!
I ASK DAN HOW MANY DRUG COURT PARTICIPANTS ARE POTHEADS...
VERY FEW. POT IS BARELY ON OUR RADAR SCREEN,* SINCE IT'S RARELY ASSOCIATED WITH ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR...
WE'VE ALSO NEVER FULLY PROSECUTED ANY MEDICAL MARIJUANA PATIENTS, I MIGHT ADD.
ARE YOU IN FAVOR OF DECRIMINALIZING POT, THEN?
(*EVERY D.A. I SPOKE TO FOR THIS STORY TOLD ME THAT POT WAS A "LOW PRIORITY" FOR HIS OR HER OFFICE, YET 25-50% OF ALL DRUG ARRESTS ARE STILL POT-RELATED. GO FIGURE!)
WELL, THAT'S A SLIPPERY SLOPE, SINCE I'M VERY AGAINST LEGALIZING MORE DANGEROUS DRUGS.
BUT ALCOHOL OFTEN LEADS TO VIOLENCE, AND—
SO WE SHOULD SELL CRYSTAL METH IN LIQUOR STORES AS WELL? NO WAY!
THAT WOULD BE A DISASTER.
PEOPLE DO REALLY CRAZY THINGS ON METH!
5.

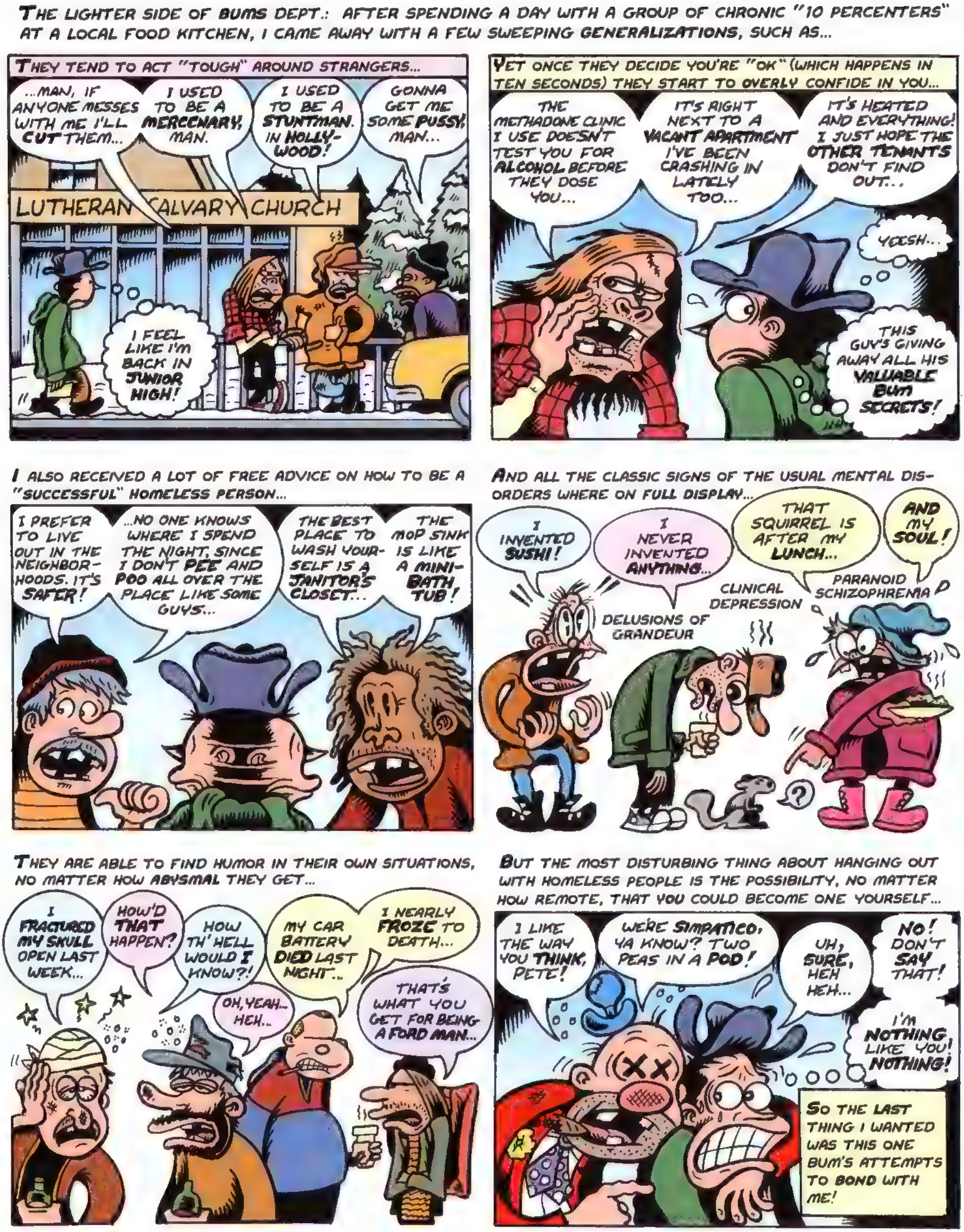

ANOTHER CONFERENCE ATTENDEE, FORMER SEATTLE POLICE CHIEF NORM STAMPER, HAS A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT OPINION...
WE DEFINITELY SHOULD LEGALIZE DRUGS, ALL DRUGS...
AND WE SHOULD SELL THEM UNDER THE SAME RULES AND RESTRICTIONS WE APPLY TO ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO.
EVEN "HARD" DRUGS, LIKE HEROIN?
YOU KNOW, OPIATES LIKE HEROIN DO NEXT TO NO DAMAGE TO THE HUMAN BODY...
IT'S THE CRAP THEY CUT IT WITH, ALONG WITH THE INCONSISTENT PURITY AND DIRTY NEEDLES THAT CAUSE HEALTH PROBLEMS.
AND THIS WOULD BE SOLVED BY HAVING IT MADE BY PROFESSIONALS IN LAB COATS?
AS OPPOSED TO A DISTRACTED USER IN A FILTHY FLOPHOUSE? OF COURSE!
"AFTER A FEW YEARS ON THE BEAT I CAME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT DRUG PROHIBITION WAS A HUGE WASTE OF THE FORCE'S TIME AND RESOURCES..."
OH, WOW, MAN! I'M IN A PO-LICE CAR!
FAR OUT!
TURN ON THE SIREN, MAN! PFAW!
"I WAS ALREADY SICK OF DRAGGING OTHERWISE HARMLESS PEOPLE OUT OF THEIR HOMES AND OFF TO JAIL—AND THIS WAS BEFORE PRESIDENT NIXON DECLARED A 'WAR ON DRUGS'!"
"OUR DRUG LAWS ALSO GIVE COPS WAY TOO MUCH DISCRETION AS TO WHO TO BUST OR NOT TO BUST, SINCE MOST PEOPLE CAUGHT HOLDING ARE NOT ARRESTED..."
GO HOME, YOUNG MAN, AND DON'T LET ME CATCH YOU BUYING DRUGS AGAIN...
YES, SIR.
AS FOR YOU — YOU'RE UNDER ARREST!
?!
"THUS THE HUGE RACIAL DISCREPANCY IN OUR ARREST RATES."
MOST POLICE OFFICERS DON'T SHARE YOUR VIEWS, THOUGH.
WHICH IS A SHAME, SINCE THE DRUG WAR HAS CORRUPTED ENTIRE POLICE DEPARTMENTS, AND IT MAKES A COP'S JOB FAR MORE DANGEROUS THAN IT NEEDS TO BE.
A LOT OF COPS SECRETLY AGREE WITH ME, TOO, SO IT'S NOT LIKE ALL OF THEM HAVE BOUGHT INTO THE LIES.
THE REST OF US SURE HAVE, THOUGH...
ALMOST EVERY PARENT I KNOW LIES TO THEIR KIDS ABOUT THEIR OWN PAST AND PRESENT DRUG USE...
WHICH IS THE DUMBEST THING THEY COULD DO, BUT THEY'RE TOO AFRAID TO TELL THEM THE TRUTH!
WE'RE SURE TO WISE UP EVENTUALLY, BUT I THINK THINGS ARE GONNA GET A LOT WORSE BEFORE THEY GET BETTER.
3.


ALL THIS POT TALK GOT ME WONDERING ABOUT ROGER SPOHN, THE SAD SACK MEDICAL MARIJUANA PATIENT I PROFILED IN A PREVIOUS STORY,* SO I MET UP WITH HIM AGAIN TO CATCH UP...
?!?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
MY BACK IS KILLING ME...
I CAN'T GET COMFORTABLE!
SQUIRM
WIGGLE
I'M SORRY TO REPORT THAT ROGER'S AS BIG A SHIT MAGNET AS EVER, AND IN SUCH BAD PHYSICAL SHAPE THAT IT'S A WONDER WHAT KEEPS HIM GOING (BESIDES POT, THAT IS).
*"A MENACE TO SOCIETY," REASON AUG/SEPT. '05
ROGER'S LATEST ROUND OF WOES BEGAN WHEN A COP WITH AN END-OF-THE-MONTH QUOTA TO FILL PULLED HIM OVER FOR HAVING "SQUEAKY WHEELS".
YES, OFFICER, I'VE BEEN SMOKING MARIJUANA...
I'M ON METHADONE, TOO...
IS THAT A PROBLEM?
?!
SPD
ONCE THE COP SMELLED POT EMANATING FROM HIS CAR, HE CHARGED HIM WITH A D.U.I., EVEN THOUGH ROGER PASSED THE FIELD SOBRIETY TEST.
SUE POLICE DETECTIVE LINDA DIAZ ("THE BANE OF MY EXISTENCE," SAYS ROGER), WHO SEARCHED ROGER'S HOME WITH A BOGUS WARRANT,* CONFISCATED ALL HIS MONEY, AND DESTROYED ALL HIS PLANTS...
SHE ALSO THREATENED TO REPOSSESS THE HOUSE ROGER WAS RENTING, SO HIS TERRIFIED LANDLORD NATURALLY EVICTED HIM.
* SHE DIDN'T TELL THE JUDGE ROGER WAS AN M.M. PATIENT.
A JURY FOUND ROGER GUILTY OF THE D.U.I. CHARGE, SO THE COUNTY IS NOW PLANNING ON TRYING HIM ON ANOTHER OLDER D.U.I. CHARGE THEY WERE SITTING ON...
I'M SUSPENDING YOUR DRIVER'S LICENSE...
I'M ALSO ORDERING YOU TO ATTEND A.A. MEETINGS...
PAF!
A.A.?! BUT I DON'T DRINK!
THEY ALSO MAY HIT HIM WITH A "GROW" CHARGE, SINCE THE POLICE CLAIM THAT HIS SUPPLY "EXCEEDED HIS NEEDS."*
* WASHINGTON STATE HAS NO SUPPLY LIMIT FOR MEDICAL MARIJUANA PATIENTS.
I THREW MY BACK OUT TRYING TO WALK TO MY STUPID A.A. MEETING...
I WAS LYING ON THE STREET FOR HOURS BEFORE SOMEONE CALLED AN AMBULANCE TO TAKE ME TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM...
BUT WORST OF ALL IS I SPENT ALL OF MY ISRAEL MONEY HIRING A LAWYER WHO SPECIALIZES IN D.U.I.'S...
?!? "ISRAEL MONEY"?
THE MONEY I WAS SAVING TO GET TO THE HOLY LAND IN TIME FOR THE RESURRECTION, THOUGH NOW IT LOOKS LIKE I'LL NEVER MAKE IT...
"THE RESURRECTION"? DO YOU REALLY THINK THESE ARE THE END DAYS?
WELL, YEAH! DON'T YOU?
I MEAN, LOOK AT WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING!
LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME!
HOW ELSE CAN YOU EXPLAIN ALL THIS CRAZINESS?
I, UH... HMM...
I COULDN'T EXPLAIN IT, SO MAYBE ROGER HAD A POINT!
END

BUMS
BY PETER BAGGE 2007
PETERBAGGE @ EARTHLINK. NET
BACK IN 2000 OR SO, A FREELANCE JOB BROUGHT ME TO DOWNTOWN SAN FRANCISCO FOR A TWO-WEEK STAY...
THIS WAS AT THE HEIGHT OF THAT CITY'S "HOMELESS CRISIS," AND THE 10-BLOCK WALK FROM MY HOTEL TO MY PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT WAS CHOKED WITH CRAZED STREET PEOPLE...
THEY ALL SEEMED TO HAVE AN EXAGGERATED SENSE OF ENTITLEMENT, PUTTING ON LOUD AIR GUITAR CONCERTS WHILE PRACTICALLY DEMANDING CHANGE FROM PASSERS-BY...
...PURPLE HAZE, IS IN MAH MIND... ♫
I AM THE NEW MESSIAH!
GIMME A DOLLAR, MAN! I KNOW YOU GOT MONEY!
HEY! I'M TALKING TO YOU!
I'D HAVE MONEY IF YOU'D LET ME GO TO WORK!
PLEASE DON'T HURT ME...
ONE DAY I SMELLED THE MOST DELICIOUS FOOD IN A NEARBY PARK. I FOLLOWED THE SCENT, INTENT ON BUYING WHATEVER IT WAS I SMELLED COOKING...
HERE YOU ARE, SIR.
AND GIVE ME ONE O' THOSE ROLLS...
THE ONES WITH THE POPPY SEEDS...
?!?
... ONLY TO COME ACROSS AN OUTDOOR SOUP KITCHEN RUN BY AFFLUENT-LOOKING HOUSEWIVES WHO WERE GIVING THEIR GOURMET CREATIONS TO THOSE SAME OBNOXIOUS STREET CRAZIES FOR FREE!
NO LONGER ABLE TO CONTAIN MYSELF, I COMPLAINED BITTERLY ABOUT THIS ONCE I REACHED THE ANIMATION STUDIO, AND IT TURNED OUT I WASN'T THE ONLY ONE WHO HAD REACHED HIS BREAKING POINT...
IT'S GOTTEN TOTALLY OUT OF CONTROL! THOSE DO-GOODERS ARE CLUELESS!
THE CITY EVEN GIVES THEM FREE MONEY EVERY MONTH!
IT'S LIKE THROWING CHEESE ALL OVER YOUR APARTMENT AND THEN WONDERING WHY YOU HAVE MICE!


WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE? WHERE DID THEY ALL COME FROM? AND WHY ARE THERE SUDDENLY FEWER OF THEM NOW? WELL, FIRST OF ALL, WHEN TALKING ABOUT "BUMS," I AM IN NO WAY REFERRING TO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:
I'M STAYING AT A BATTERED WOMEN'S SHELTER TO HIDE FROM MY ABUSIVE BOYFRIEND.
MY PARENT'S KICKED ME OUT WHEN I TOLD THEM I WAS GAY.
MY WORKMAN'S COMP RAN OUT, SO WE CAN'T MAKE THE RENT...
WE'RE LIVING IN OUR CAR UNTIL I CAN WORK AGAIN.
I'M COUCH SURFING THIS SUMMER TO SAVE FOR COLLEGE.
SYMPATHETIC, THERE-BUT-FOR-THE-GRACE-OF-GOD TYPES LIKE THESE MAKE UP AROUND 90 PERCENT OF THE OFFICIAL "HOMELESS" POPULATION AT ANY GIVEN TIME. THEY ALSO ARE RARELY HOMELESS FOR LONGER THAN SIX MONTHS.
ALSO, THERE ARE SO MANY CHARITIES AND AGENCIES THAT ARE READY AND EAGER TO HELP PEOPLE IN NEED WHO ASK FOR HELP THAT IT'S ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANYONE TO GO HUNGRY IN THE U.S. THESE DAYS...
DON'T YOU CARE ABOUT THE HOMELESS, LADY?
I CARE ABOUT YOUR POOR DOG...
WHY DOES HE HAVE TO BE HOMELESS WITH YOU?
HELP HUNGRY HOMELESS
PITY PROP
ALL THOSE PEOPLE HOLDING SIGNS AND GLARING AT YOU AT BUSY INTERSECTIONS ARE NOT ONLY WELL-FED, THEY ALSO AREN'T HOMELESS. THEY'RE JUST LAZY JERKS!
MOST OF THE MORE OBNOXIOUS STREET PEOPLE YOU RUN INTO AREN'T HOMELESS EITHER. THEY'RE JUST PIMPS, CON ARTISTS, AND SMALL-TIME CROOKS WHO "HIDE" AMONG THE HOMELESS POPULATION TO AVOID DETECTION AND TO EXPLOIT THE SERVICES SET UP TO HELP THE NEEDY...
AN EMPTY PACK O' CIGS? IS THAT ALL YOU GOT?!
LOOKS LIKE I'LL HAVE TO TAKE IT OUT OF YOUR ASS...
NO! PLEASE! LEAVE ME ALONE!
THESE PREDATORS ALSO USE AND ABUSE THE REAL HOMELESS, OFTEN TO A TRULY HORRIFIC DEGREE.
THIS POOR FELLOW IS ONE OF THE CHRONIC "10 PERCENTERS" — THOSE TRAGIC SOULS WHO LIVE MOST OF THEIR ADULT LIVES WITHOUT ANY PERMANENT SHELTER...
...OH MY GOD...
I WISH I WAS DEAD...
MOST OF THEM ARE MALE, AND THEY TEND TO ABUSE DRUGS AND ALCOHOL, THOUGH WHAT THEY ALL HAVE IN COMMON IS THAT THEY SUFFER FROM ONE OF MORE TYPES OF DEBILITATING MENTAL ILLNESS.
THEY ALSO MOSTLY COME FROM POOR, DYSFUNCTIONAL, AND/OR ABUSIVE FAMILIES WHERE NO ONE IS WILLING OR ABLE TO DEAL WITH THEIR MENTAL PROBLEMS, WHICH IS HOW THEY WIND UP ON THE STREET IN THE FIRST PLACE...
...KING OF THE ROAD...
PALOOKA-VILLE
THE MYTH OF THE CAREFREE HOBO WHO CHOOSES TO LIVE UNDER THE STARS IS JUST THAT: A MYTH! ANYONE WHO'D OPT FOR SUCH A WRETCHED LIFE IS CRAZY BY DEFINITION!

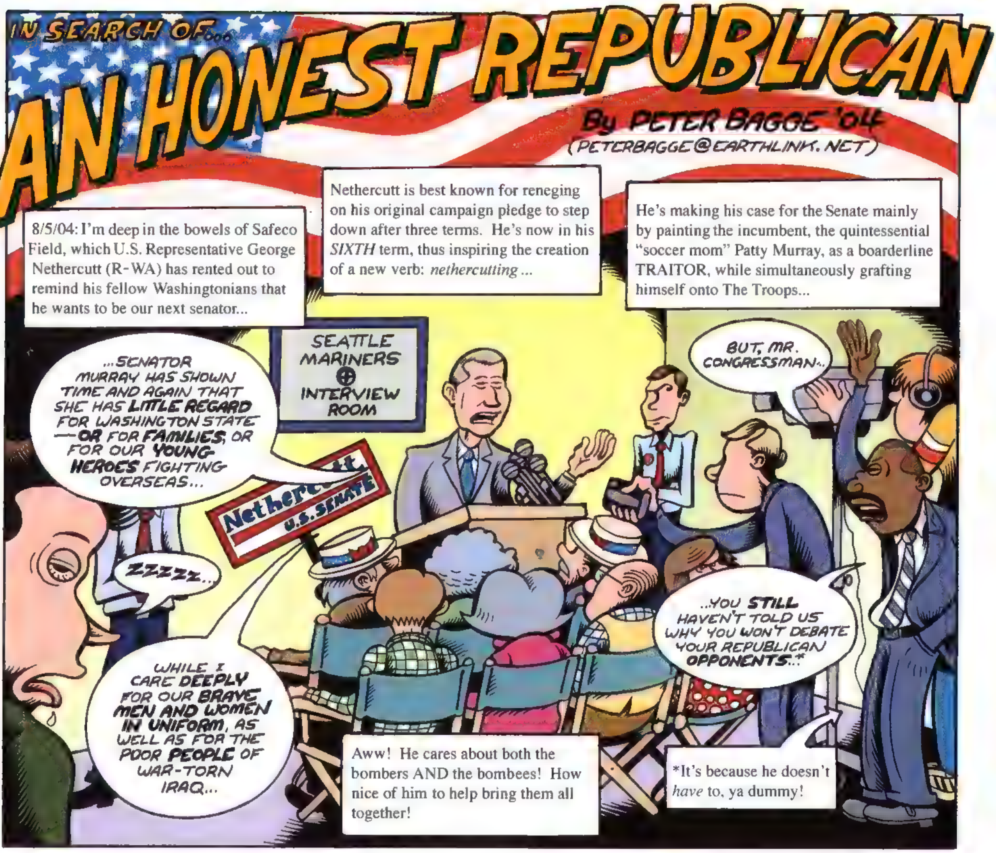

MORE SAD BUM FACTS:
THE LIFE EXPECTANCY OF A CHRONICALLY HOMELESS PERSON IN THE U.S. IS 47...
ONE-THIRD OF THEM DIE FROM ALCOHOL POISONING, WHILE ANOTHER 25 PERCENT DIE FROM TRAUMA (MURDER, SUICIDE, ACCIDENTS, ETC.)
THEY ALSO ARE 10 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO BE MURDERED, BE SEXUALLY ASSAULTED, AND COMMIT SUICIDE THAN THE GENERAL POPULATION...
AND ALMOST ALL OF THEM HAVE BEEN IN AND OUT OF JAIL, DETOX, AND REHAB COUNTLESS TIMES, ONLY TO FALL OFF THE WAGON AS SOON AS THEY'RE RELEASED!
THEY ALSO COST THE REST OF US A FORTUNE IN EMERGENCY HEALTH CARE -- IN SOME CASES UP TO $100,000 A YEAR!
...OH, NO! NOT HER AGAIN!
GASP!
WHEEZE
FOR EXAMPLE, A RESIDENT OF A SEATTLE HOMELESS SHELTER WHO SUFFERED FROM EMPHYSEMA WOUND UP IN THE E.R. EVERY TIME SHE SMOKED A CIGARETTE -- ONLY SHE INSISTED ON SMOKING EVERY DAY!
HOSPITALS ARE SO OVERWHELMED BY THESE REPEAT VISITORS AND THEIR SELF-INFLICTED WOUNDS THAT MANY OF THEM NO LONGER OFFER EMERGENCY SERVICES AT ALL...
AREN'T YOU SICK OF CARRYING ME TO THE BATHROOM?
YOU'RE NOT GETTING A WHEELCHAIR! THOSE ARE FOR PAYING CUSTOMERS!
MAN! HOW SPITEFUL CAN YOU GET?
I ONCE SHARED A HOSPITAL ROOM WITH A WINO WHO BROKE HIS LEGS (AFTER DRUNKENLY FALLING IN FRONT OF AN AMBULANCE!), YET THE NURSES REFUSED TO LET HIM USE A WHEELCHAIR, CLAIMING HE DIDN'T DESERVE ONE!
MANY CITIES, INCLUDING SAN FRANCISCO AND SEATTLE, RECENTLY HAVE ADOPTED A POLICY CALLED "HOUSING FIRST," WHICH PROVIDES A FREE ROOM FOR CHRONICALLY HOMELESS ALCOHOLICS WITHOUT ANY SOBRIETY REQUIREMENTS...
UGH... I'M TOO DRUNK TO GET UP...
BUT AT LEAST I'M NOT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE HIGHWAY LIKE I WAS LAST NIGHT...
THESE BARE-BONES "BUNKS FOR DRUNKS" ALREADY HAVE DRASTICALLY REDUCED THE NUMBER OF EMERGENCY ROOM VISITS FOR THEIR RESIDENTS SIMPLY BY ALLOWING THEM TO GET HAMMERED INDOORS FOR A CHANGE.
CRITICS DERIDE THIS APPROACH AS "REWARDING" DRUNKS BEFORE THEY MANAGE TO GET SOBER, WHICH IGNORES THE FACT THAT THESE GUYS WILL NEVER BE SOBER...
I'M ALSO AN ALCOHOLIC, BUT I JOINED A.A. AND CLEANED UP MY ACT...
UNLESS THESE BUMS DO THE SAME I HAVE NO SYMPATHY FOR THEM!
THE SAD TRUTH IS THAT THERE IS NO "CURE" FOR CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS. ALL WE CAN DO IS APPLY BAND-AIDS, TO REDUCE THE COSTS AND RISKS.


THE LIGHTER SIDE OF BUMS DEPT.: AFTER SPENDING A DAY WITH A GROUP OF CHRONIC "10 PERCENTERS" AT A LOCAL FOOD KITCHEN, I CAME AWAY WITH A FEW SWEEPING GENERALIZATIONS, SUCH AS...
THEY TEND TO ACT "TOUGH" AROUND STRANGERS...
...MAN, IF ANYONE MESSES WITH ME I'LL CUT THEM...
I USED TO BE A MERCENARY, MAN.
I USED TO BE A STUNTMAN. IN HOLLY-WOOD!
GONNA GET ME SOME PUSSY, MAN...
LUTHERAN CALVARY CHURCH
I FEEL LIKE I'M BACK IN JUNIOR HIGH!
YET ONCE THEY DECIDE YOU'RE "OK" (WHICH HAPPENS IN TEN SECONDS) THEY START TO OVERLY CONFIDE IN YOU...
THE METHADONE CLINIC I USE DOESN'T TEST YOU FOR ALCOHOL BEFORE THEY DOSE YOU...
IT'S RIGHT NEXT TO A VACANT APARTMENT I'VE BEEN CRASHING IN LATELY TOO...
IT'S HEATED AND EVERYTHING! I JUST HOPE THE OTHER TENANTS DON'T FIND OUT...
YEESH...
THIS GUY'S GIVING AWAY ALL HIS VALUABLE BUM SECRETS!
I ALSO RECEIVED A LOT OF FREE ADVICE ON HOW TO BE A "SUCCESSFUL" HOMELESS PERSON...
I PREFER TO LIVE OUT IN THE NEIGHBOR-HOODS. IT'S SAFER!
...NO ONE KNOWS WHERE I SPEND THE NIGHT, SINCE I DON'T PEE AND POO ALL OVER THE PLACE LIKE SOME GUYS...
THE BEST PLACE TO WASH YOUR-SELF IS A JANITOR'S CLOSET...
THE MOP SINK IS LIKE A MINI-BATH TUB!
AND ALL THE CLASSIC SIGNS OF THE USUAL MENTAL DIS-ORDERS WHERE ON FULL DISPLAY...
I INVENTED SUSHI!
I NEVER INVENTED ANYTHING...
THAT SQUIRREL IS AFTER MY LUNCH...
AND MY SOUL!
DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR
CLINICAL DEPRESSION
PARANOID SCHIZOPHRENIA
THEY ARE ABLE TO FIND HUMOR IN THEIR OWN SITUATIONS, NO MATTER HOW ABYSMAL THEY GET...
I FRACTURED MY SKULL OPEN LAST WEEK...
HOW'D THAT HAPPEN?
HOW TH' HELL WOULD I KNOW?!
OH, YEAH... HEH...
MY CAR BATTERY DIED LAST NIGHT...
I NEARLY FROZE TO DEATH...
THAT'S WHAT YOU GET FOR BEING A FORD MAN...
BUT THE MOST DISTURBING THING ABOUT HANGING OUT WITH HOMELESS PEOPLE IS THE POSSIBILITY, NO MATTER HOW REMOTE, THAT YOU COULD BECOME ONE YOURSELF...
I LIKE THE WAY YOU THINK, PETE!
WE'RE SIMPATICO, YA KNOW? TWO PEAS IN A POD!
UH, SURE, HEH HEH...
NO! DON'T SAY THAT!
I'M NOTHING LIKE YOU! NOTHING!
SO THE LAST THING I WANTED WAS THIS ONE BUM'S ATTEMPTS TO BOND WITH ME!

STUPID

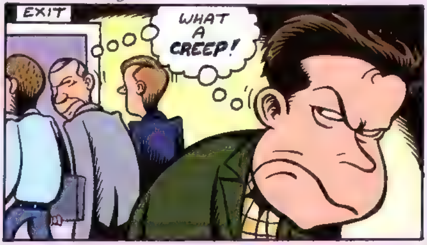
POLITICS

MITT
ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT
ENTITLEMENT
CAFE
DESSERT MENU
HILLARY
BARACK
BILL
TOTAL
$10 TRILLION
DOLLARS
TABASCO
SAUCE
P. BAGGE '08



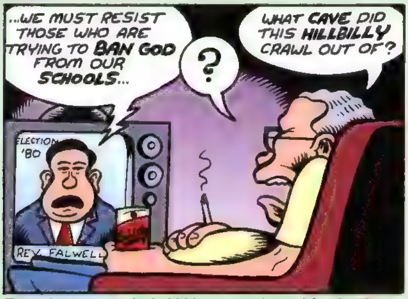
Nethercutt's dark horse status meant a small media presence, which also meant that I got to spend a whopping *two minutes* talking to him one-on-one -- though it felt more like I was being talked *at*...

At that, the congressman gave me the requisite hearty handshake and trademark Republican polite-yet-condescending smile before rushing back to D.C. to vote yet again in favor of a "balanced budget"...



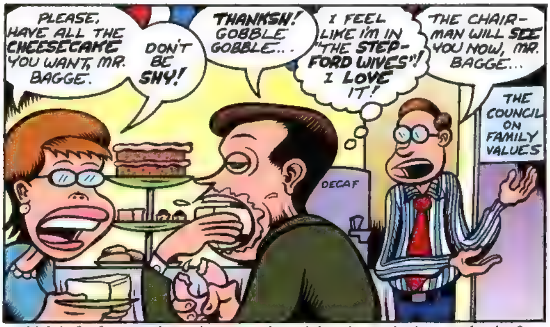
I felt like I had dropped the ball by not calling him on the BS he hurled at me, but I couldn't bring myself to *get all up in his face* about it, figuring I'd just make fun of him in this comic strip instead. Just call me a gonzo *pussy*!

My dad was a Republican. He was all about low taxes and smaller government, though he was what would later be called a "moderate" or "Northeast establishment" Republican – a group that became somewhat marginalized as the religious right first joined and then began to dominate the G.O.P...



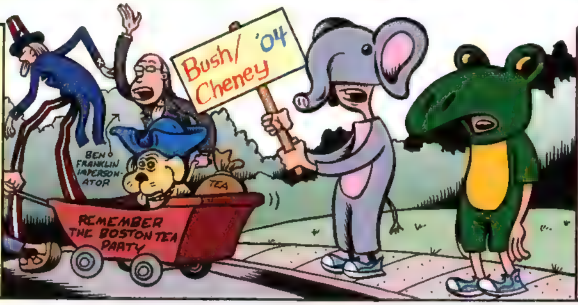
From that point on he held his nose and voted for the "lesser of two evils" – something he *never* felt he was doing when pulling the lever for the likes of Eisenhower and Goldwater.

These days, the only person who even pretends to believe that the GOP stands for a fiscally restrained, "hands off" government is George Nethercutt's speechwriter. The question is, does anyone care? Do any *Republicans* care? Out of curiosity, I decided to ask a few of them myself...



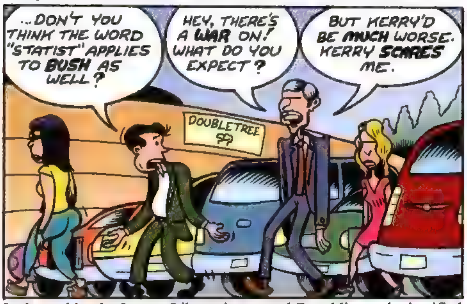
...which is far from a grim assignment, since right-wing gatherings tend to be far more pleasant and *organized* affairs than their perpetually frazzled left-wing counterparts. Plus they know that the best way to a journalist's brain is through his stomach!

Republicans also love to wallow in all sorts of AMERICANA, which can be quite charming, if not downright *hilarious* at times. It seems to be a point of pride that they out-do-the Dems in the sheer number of Uncle-Sams-on-Stilts or pets dressed as patriots at all of their rallies...



My all-time favorites were these two little kids dressed in animal costumes. The elephant reference was obvious, but who wss the kid in the FROG COSTUME supposed to represent? *FRANCE,* perhaps? I kept waiting for the elephant kid to beat up the frog kid as part of some political passion play, but no such luck.

One event that was sure to have plenty of such all-American cheese (as well as cheese*cake)* was this RNC-sponsored talk by the author of a book about the Founding Fathers, held in some slick suburban hotel. Being a Founding Fathers fetishist myself, I was there with bells on!

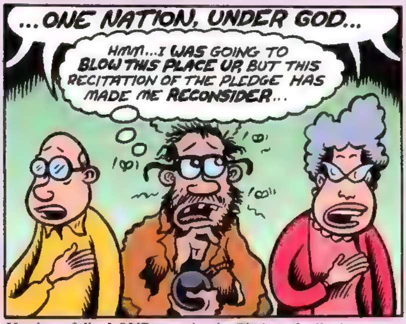


In the parking lot I met a Libertarian-turned-Republican who justified his support for Bush by his fear of what an "unabashed statist" like Kerry would do to the economy. Like a true conservative, he'd rather settle for our *current* mess than experience a *new* mess!

Once inside, I listened to a woman who was running for a county judge position do some campaigning. Since the big news that week concerned a Seattle judge who had recently ruled in favor of gay marriage, everyone wanted to hear her take on such egregious judicial "activism"...

She seemed both annoyed and confused by all the right-wing radio talking points being thrown at her, and when I later learned that she's a NARAL-endorsed trial lawyer, I had to wonder why she was even there.

Before the lecture began, we were all asked to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Now this is one bit of Americana I could do without, since being obliged to recite the Pledge always adds a suffocating air of oppressiveness to any occasion. I *hate* it!



Yet these folks LOVE to recite the Pledge of Allegience! It seems to give them some kind of security, as if it were a magic spell to ward off *evil*. It's *weird*!

I was curious as to how Steven W. Allen, author of *Founding Fathers: Uncommon Heroes,* could also be a supporter of the all *too* common George W. Bush. I simply couldn't imagine how he could address the enormous intellectual chasm between his book's subjects and our current president...

The inclusion of that much overused and abused word *heroes* should have been a tip-off, however, since Allen's take on the Founders was insufferably school-marmish and sentimental. It was all God and Country and Mom's Apple Pie. I felt like I was in the second grade again, praying for the bell to ring.

The author also went way out of his way to downplay any controversy regarding the Founders' alleged indiscretions, while also insisting that all of them were lifelong, unwavering CHRISTIANS...

Sounding like the lawyer that he is, Allen apparently has moved to exclude the Founders' *own writings* as evidence, to avoid self-incrimination. "My clients plead the Fifth, your Honor!

Allen closed his PowerPoint presentation with a photo of President Bush signing 2002's hilariously titled "Corporate Responsibility Act"...

Once again my jaw was hitting the floor, since not only does this latest regulatory placebo represent the type of economic naiveté ("let's criminalize *irresponsibility*!") that the Democrats are supposed to be so guilty of, but the people who *perpetrated* the very scandal Bush cited are among his very best friends! Still, everyone in the room nodded in approval. God bless George W. Bush!

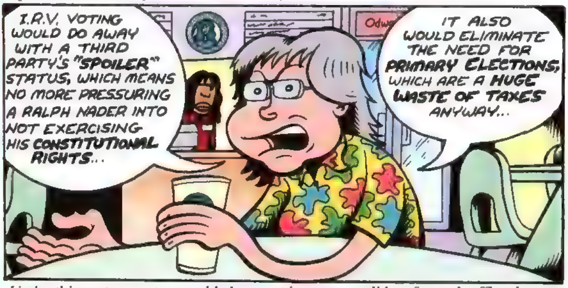
Finally, the *real* purpose of this meeting manifested itself, as an energetic, hard-sell, Young Republican got up and started urging everyone to *get out the vote*. He also spoke optimistically about how Washington should be considered a "swing state"...

This particular talking point, i.e.: *don't let those commie faggots in Seattle give our state to Kerry,* was immediately embraced by this room full of phone-tree organizers – a little TOO enthusiastically, in one case!

The speaker continued with more tips on how to sway fence-sitters...

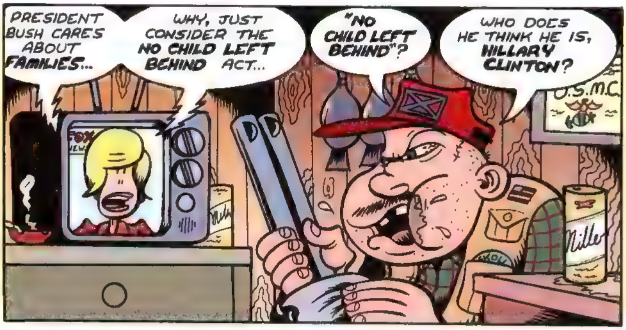
He was speaking purely in pragmatic terms, of course, but his words also spoke volumes about our inherently flawed electoral system.

Ruth Bennett is a Libertarian candidate for governor of Washington state. As is the case with every other third-party candidate, Ruth strongly supports State Initiative 318, which would implement IRV, or "instant runoff voting" (see www.irvwa.org for an explanation of exactly how it would work)...



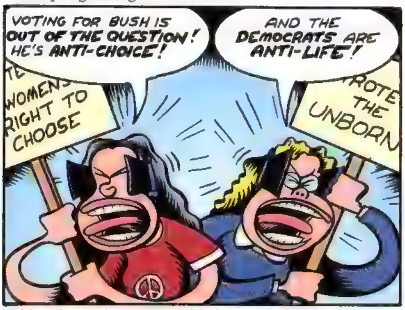
Under this system, voters could chose not just one candidate for each office, but a second, third, and fourth favorite as well. That way, no vote could be considered "wasted," as all the second-place votes (as would third and fourth-place votes, if necessary) are counted until one candidate has accumulated a majority.

I have no idea if IRV would succeed as advertised, but I'm more than willing to give it a shot – especially after hearing every Bush supporter I spoke to suppress *any* misgivings they might have about their candidate, in order to present a *united front*...



I guess I shouldn't be surprised that I *didn't* run into anyone who was openly horrified by our current GOP-controlled government's spend-aholic ways and enthusiastic "nation building," since they're more likely to be found sitting at home cursing the TV than attending some dumbass "rally."

Then there's the War on Terror, which trumps *everything* to some folks. To them, it's wrong to question war *at all* while said war is being conducted – which, when you consider that this "war on terror" could go on *forever,* is a very frightening attitude indeed!



Add to that such nonnegotiable issues as Abortion and Gun Rights (as well as that latest great divider, Gay Marriage), and you're always going to run into a lot of folks with blinders on in *both* camps.

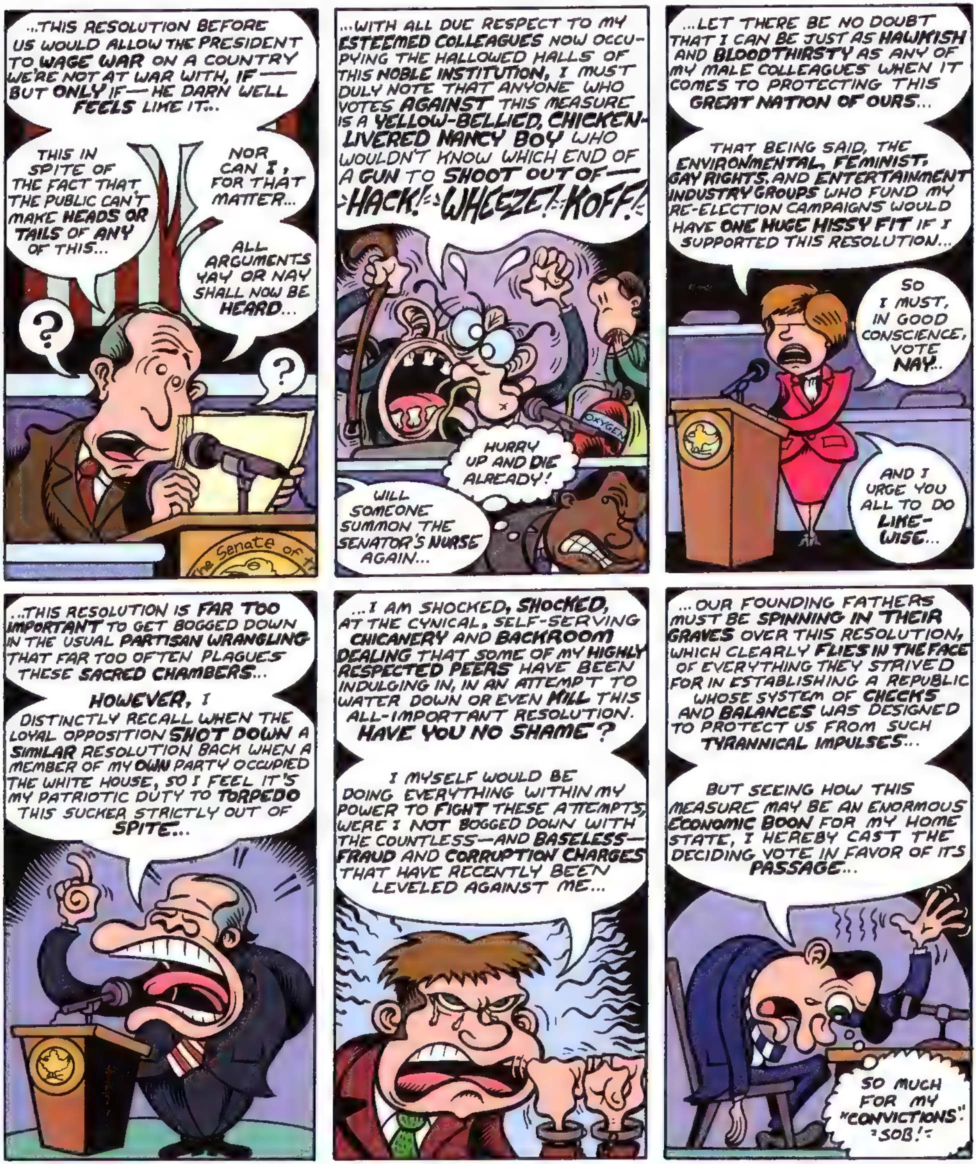
This "choose sides!" political system of ours forces people to check their brains at the door once they join one party or another. This is evident in the way they routinely draw completely different conclusions from the same set of facts, while simultaneously insisting that everyone who comes to the "wrong" conclusion has been "brainwashed" by "corrupt" media...

It's no wonder so many Americans are entirely turned off by what passes for political discourse in this country. To the Major Party Faithful, the nonaligned are all guilty of being "misinformed" or "apathetic," but I'd say that turning a deaf ear to *both* sides' rhetoric may be the most *intelligent* political "stance" of all!

CONFESSIONS OF A SERIAL PRESIDENT HATER
BY PETER "MALCONTENT" BAGGE 2002
(PETERBAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET)
IT RECENTLY OCCURRED TO ME THAT I'VE HAD A LOW OPINION OF EVERY U.S. PRESIDENT TO SERVE IN OFFICE DURING MY LIFETIME.
...WE MUST FIGHT CORPORATE FRAUD FOR THE SAKE OF THE CHILDREN...
?!?
"THE CHILDREN"?
STOP BABBLING!
YA BOOB!
IT ALL STARTED BACK WHEN I WAS TEN WITH LYNDON JOHNSON, AND THE VIETNAM WAR WAS SPIRALLING OUT OF CONTROL...
...AH SHALL NOT SEEK RE-ELECTION...
GOOD!
YA WAR MONGER!
A YOUNG RADICAL
THE BEATLES
...AND EVER SINCE THEN I'VE NEVER LACKED FOR A REASON TO LOATHE EACH ONE OF HIS SUCCESSORS...
I AM NOT A CROOK!
POLAND IS NOT IN EUROPE!
AH HAVE SINNED IN MY HEART...
THE EVIL EMPIRE!
SADDAM HUSSEIN IS A BAD MAN!
AH DID NOT EJACULATE ON THAT WOMAN!
SADDAM HUSSEIN BAD! BAD!
NIXON (A CROOK)
FORD (A DOLT)
CARTER (A WIMP)
REAGAN (SENILE)
BUSH SR. (A CREEP)
CLINTON (A SLEAZE)
BUSH JR. (A DUMB CREEP!)
CURIOUSLY, WHEN I READ ABOUT PAST PRESIDENTS MANY OF THEM STRIKE ME AS ADMIRABLE MEN — AND I HAVE A PARTICULAR SOFT SPOT FOR SOME OF OUR MORE MALIGNED FORMER HEADS OF STATE.
WHY, THAT JAMES K. POLK GOT A BUM RAP!
WHERE WERE YOU WHEN GARFIELD WAS SHOT?
FORGOTTEN PRESIDENTS
A TUB OR TAFT
COOL, COOL COOLIDGE
THE LEGACY OF RUTHERFORD B. HAYES
PARTYIN' HARDING
MARTIN VAN WHO?
THOSE LAME DUCK ADAMSES
DON'T BLAME ME! BY H. HOOVER
TIPPECANOE AND WHO GIVES A CRAP?
I'M BACK! BY CLEVELAND
THE OTHER HARRISON
A BLOKE NAMED POLK
IMPEACHED! THE ANDREW JOHNSON STORY
THE MAIN REASON FOR THIS MUST BE THAT I WASN'T AROUND TO HEAR ANY OF THE POMPOUS, POLITICALLY MOTIVATED NOISES THAT PAST PRESIDENTS ISSUED FOR PUBLIC CONSUMPTION.
FIFTY-FOUR FORTY OR FIGHT!
WHY, THAT POLK IS NAUGHT BUT A WAR-MONGER!
HUZZAH!
A VOTE FOR POLK IS A VOTE FOR MANIFEST DESTINY
THIS REALIZATION MAKES ME CONSIDER BITING MY TONGUE THE NEXT TIME OUR CHIEF EXEC INDULGES IN SOME SHAMELESS POSTURING...
...WE MUST FIGHT CHILD ABDUCTIONS — FOR THE SAKE OF THE CHILDREN!
NMPTH!
BLKF!
...ALTHOUGH I MAY HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL THE NEXT ADMINISTRATION BEFORE I START.

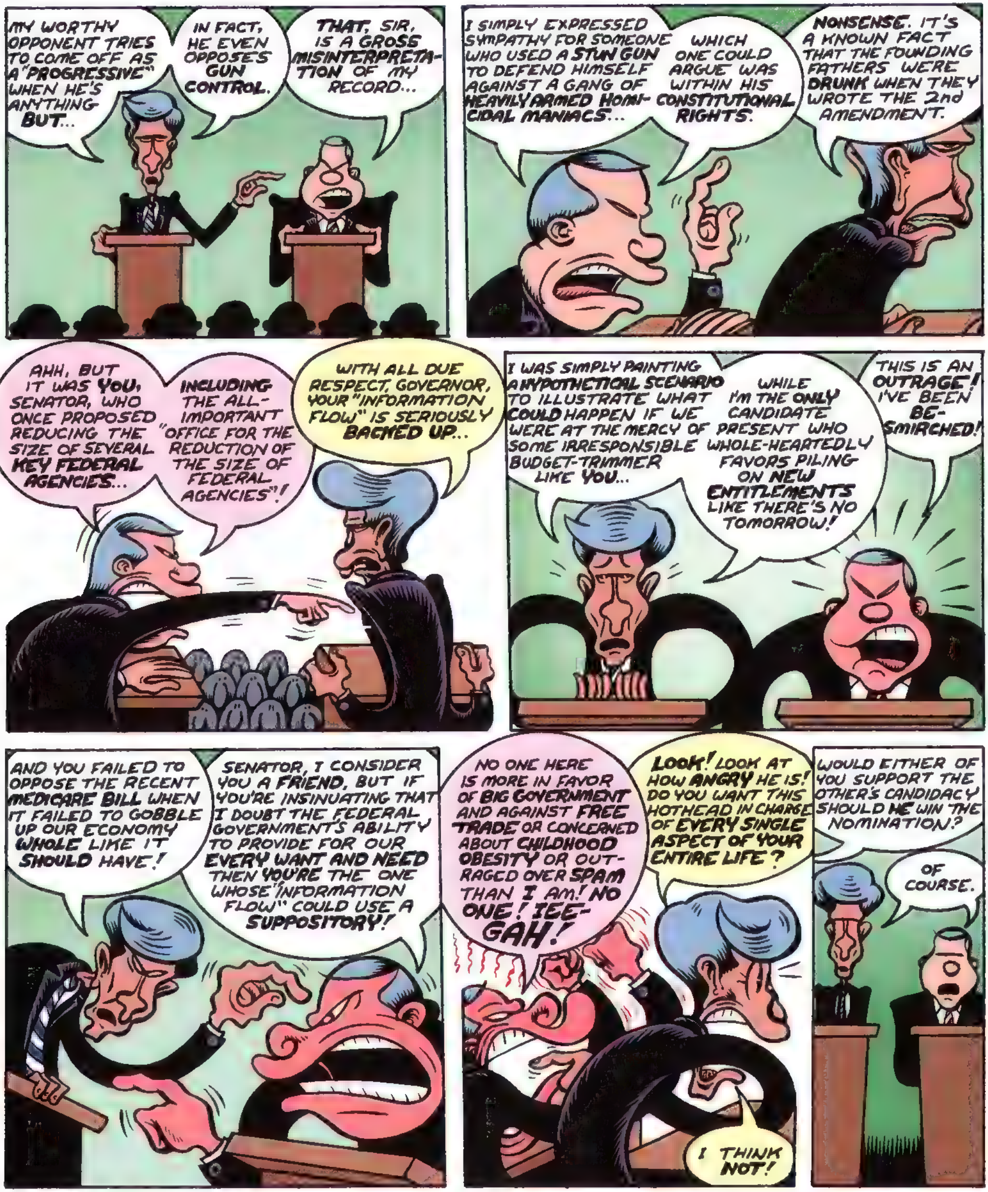
"LET US DELIBERATE..."

PETERBAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET



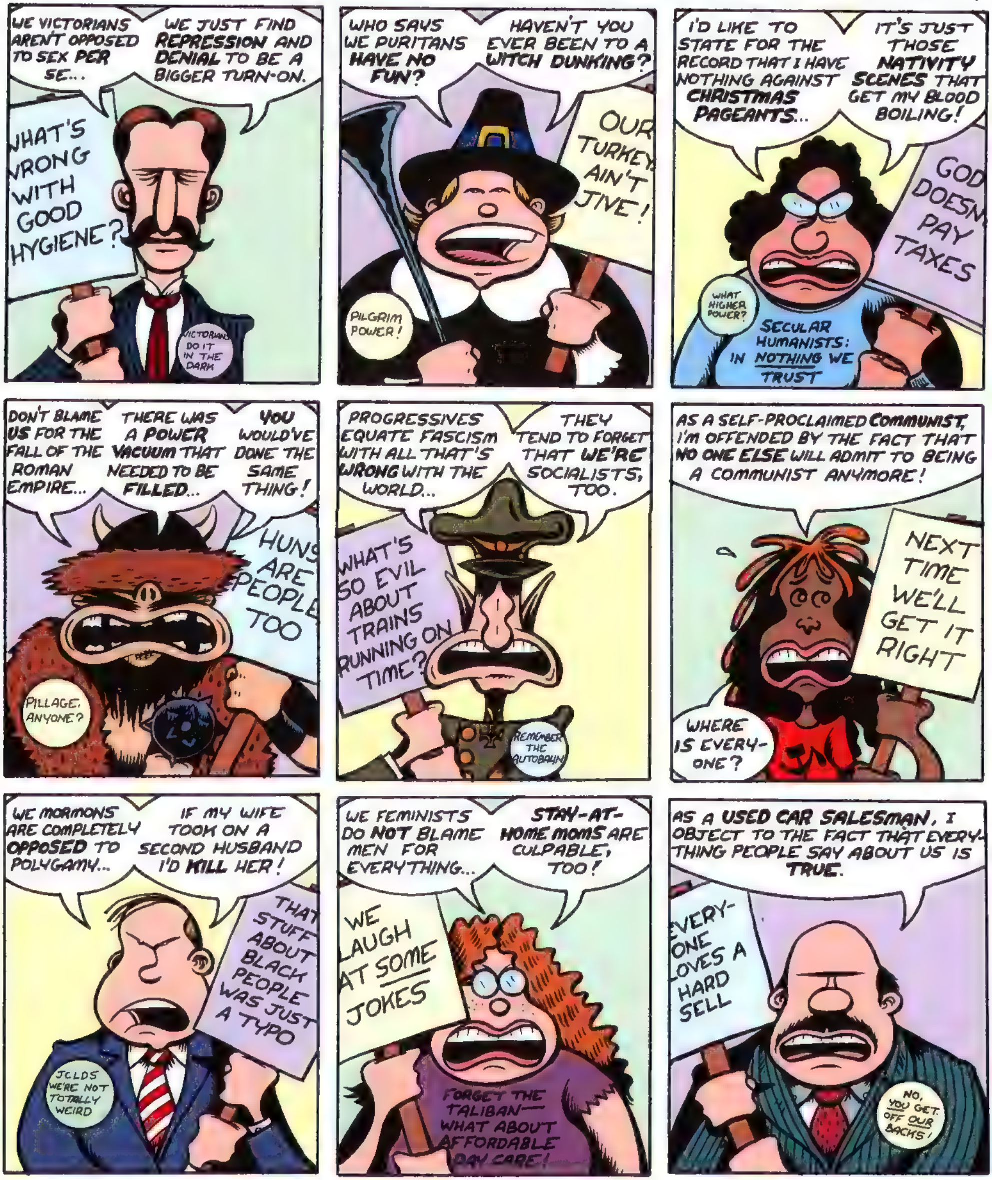
PLAYING to the TOTALITARIAN LEFT

TWO DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES APPEAL TO THEIR PARTY'S "CORE," BY PETER BAGGE 2004



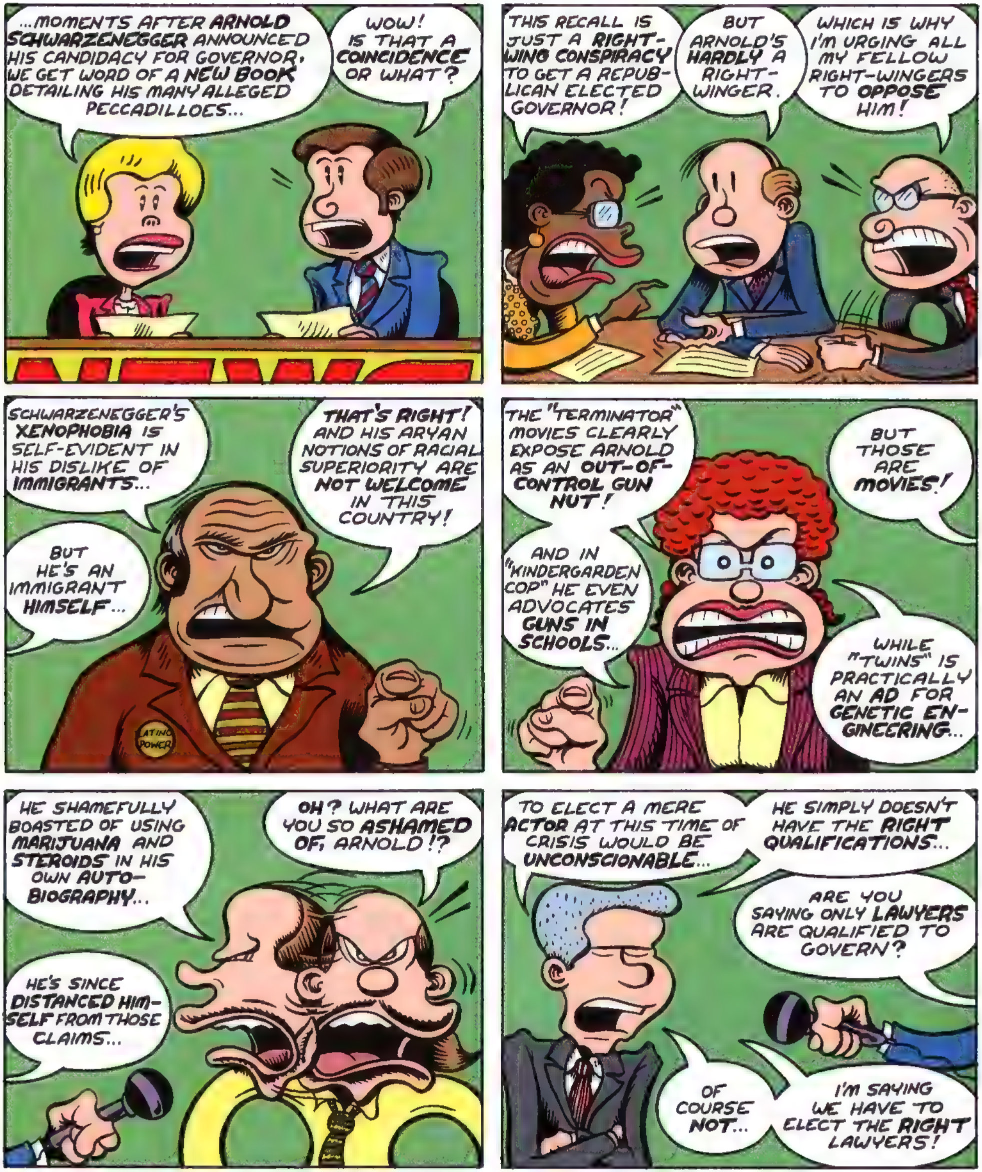
FASCISTS HAVE FEELINGS, TOO

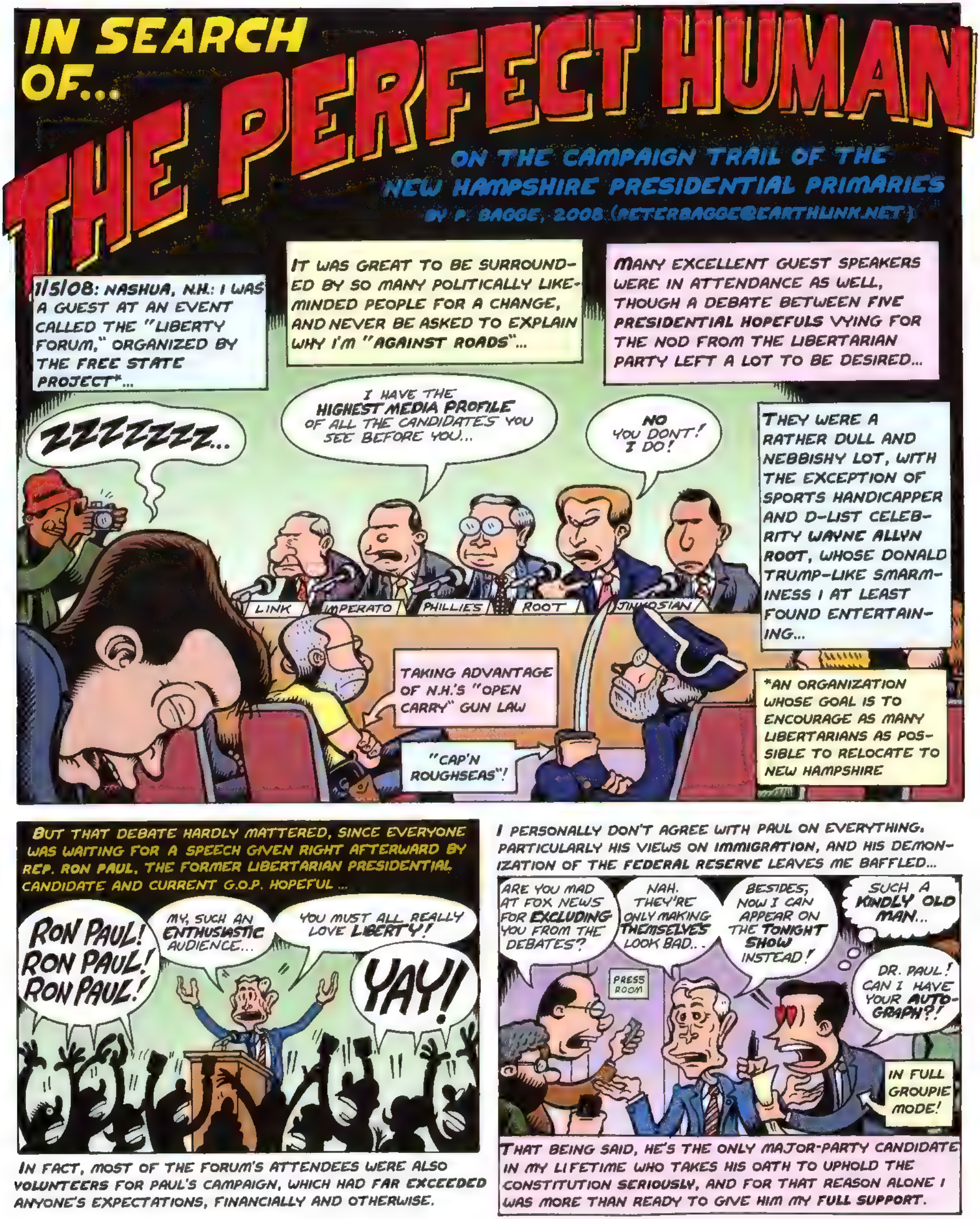
OR: *"AN ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN,"* by P. BAGGE '04 (PETERBAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET)



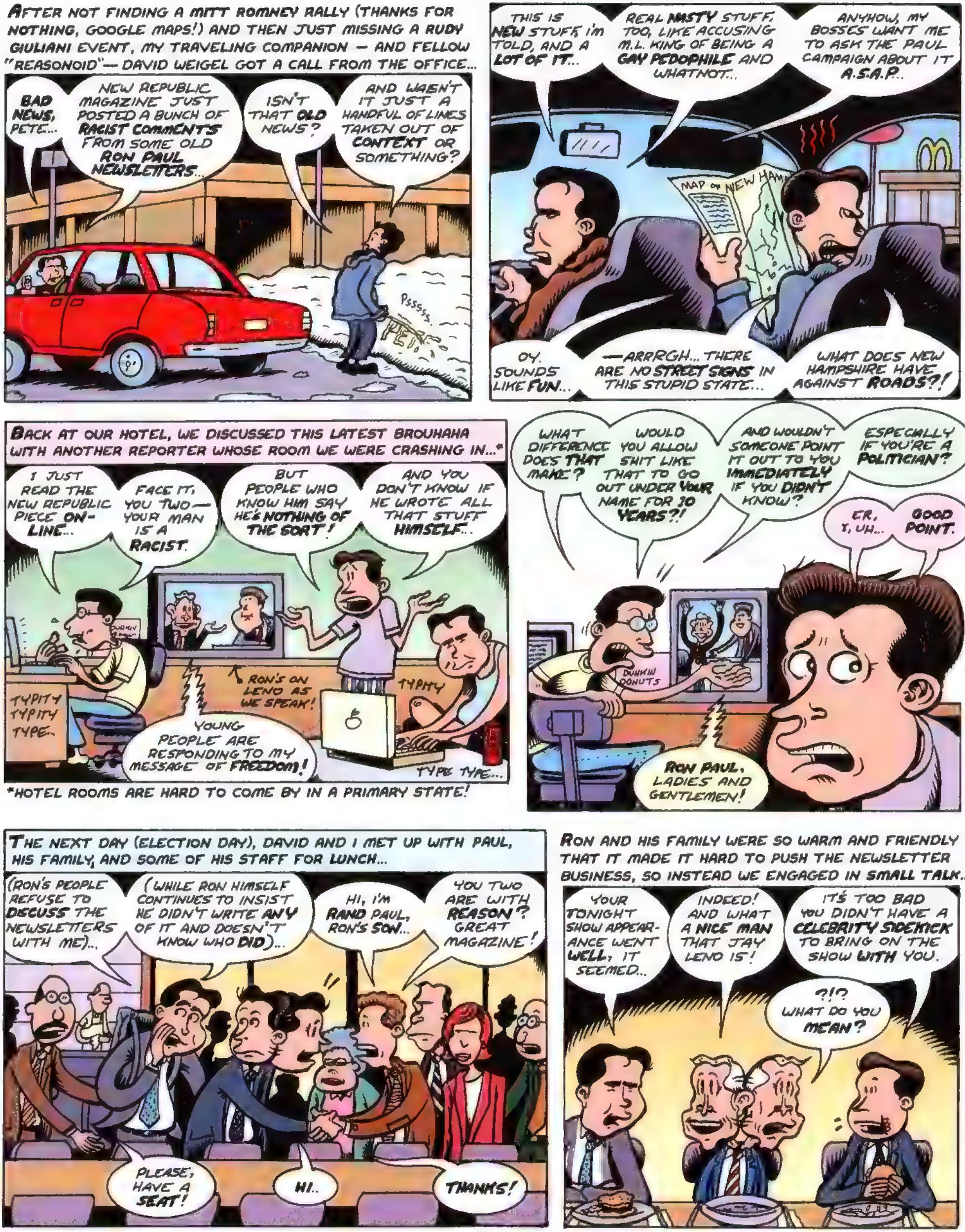
TAKING OUT ARNOLD ONE SOUNDBITE AT A TIME

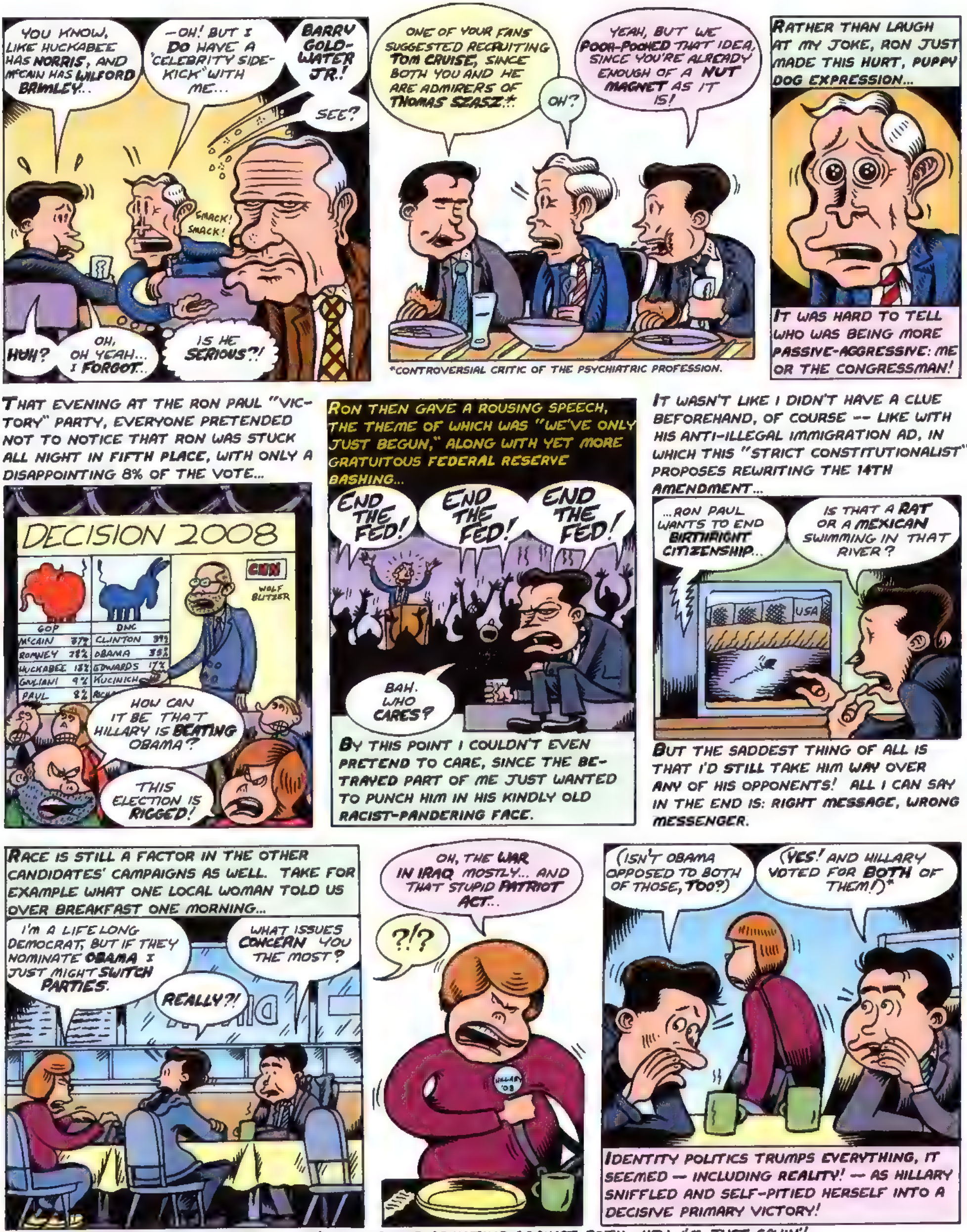
PETERBAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET




IN SEARCH OF...
THE PERFECT HUMAN
ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL OF THE NEW HAMPSHIRE PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARIES
BY P. BAGGE, 2008 (PETERBAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET)
1/5/08: NASHUA, N.H.: I WAS A GUEST AT AN EVENT CALLED THE "LIBERTY FORUM," ORGANIZED BY THE FREE STATE PROJECT*...
IT WAS GREAT TO BE SURROUNDED BY SO MANY POLITICALLY LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE FOR A CHANGE, AND NEVER BE ASKED TO EXPLAIN WHY I'M "AGAINST ROADS"...
MANY EXCELLENT GUEST SPEAKERS WERE IN ATTENDANCE AS WELL, THOUGH A DEBATE BETWEEN FIVE PRESIDENTIAL HOPEFULS VYING FOR THE NOD FROM THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY LEFT A LOT TO BE DESIRED...
ZZZZZZZ...
I HAVE THE HIGHEST MEDIA PROFILE OF ALL THE CANDIDATES YOU SEE BEFORE YOU...
NO YOU DON'T! I DO!
THEY WERE A RATHER DULL AND NEBBISHY LOT, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF SPORTS HANDICAPPER AND D-LIST CELEBRITY WAYNE ALLYN ROOT, WHOSE DONALD TRUMP-LIKE SMARMINESS I AT LEAST FOUND ENTERTAINING...
LINK
IMPERATO
PHILLIES
ROOT
JINGOSIAN
TAKING ADVANTAGE OF N.H.'S "OPEN CARRY" GUN LAW
"CAP'N ROUGHSEAS"!
*AN ORGANIZATION WHOSE GOAL IS TO ENCOURAGE AS MANY LIBERTARIANS AS POSSIBLE TO RELOCATE TO NEW HAMPSHIRE
BUT THAT DEBATE HARDLY MATTERED, SINCE EVERYONE WAS WAITING FOR A SPEECH GIVEN RIGHT AFTERWARD BY REP. RON PAUL, THE FORMER LIBERTARIAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE AND CURRENT G.O.P. HOPEFUL...
RON PAUL! RON PAUL! RON PAUL!
MY, SUCH AN ENTHUSIASTIC AUDIENCE...
YOU MUST ALL REALLY LOVE LIBERTY!
YAY!
IN FACT, MOST OF THE FORUM'S ATTENDEES WERE ALSO VOLUNTEERS FOR PAUL'S CAMPAIGN, WHICH HAD FAR EXCEEDED ANYONE'S EXPECTATIONS, FINANCIALLY AND OTHERWISE.
I PERSONALLY DON'T AGREE WITH PAUL ON EVERYTHING. PARTICULARLY HIS VIEWS ON IMMIGRATION, AND HIS DEMONIZATION OF THE FEDERAL RESERVE LEAVES ME BAFFLED...
ARE YOU MAD AT FOX NEWS FOR EXCLUDING YOU FROM THE DEBATES?
NAH. THEY'RE ONLY MAKING THEMSELVES LOOK BAD...
BESIDES, NOW I CAN APPEAR ON THE TONIGHT SHOW INSTEAD!
SUCH A KINDLY OLD MAN...
PRESS ROOM
DR. PAUL! CAN I HAVE YOUR AUTOGRAPH?!
IN FULL GROUPIE MODE!
THAT BEING SAID, HE'S THE ONLY MAJOR-PARTY CANDIDATE IN MY LIFETIME WHO TAKES HIS OATH TO UPHOLD THE CONSTITUTION SERIOUSLY, AND FOR THAT REASON ALONE I WAS MORE THAN READY TO GIVE HIM MY FULL SUPPORT.

WITH NEW HAMPSHIRE'S PRIMARY ELECTION JUST DAYS AWAY, I TOOK ADVANTAGE OF MY DUBIOUS "PRESS" CREDENTIALS AND DROVE AROUND THE STATE CATCHING AS MANY OF THE OTHER MAJOR CANDIDATES AS I POSSIBLY COULD. HIGHLIGHTS:


AFTER NOT FINDING A MITT ROMNEY RALLY (THANKS FOR NOTHING, GOOGLE MAPS!) AND THEN JUST MISSING A RUDY GIULIANI EVENT, MY TRAVELING COMPANION — AND FELLOW "REASONOID"— DAVID WEIGEL GOT A CALL FROM THE OFFICE...
BAD NEWS, PETE...
NEW REPUBLIC MAGAZINE JUST POSTED A BUNCH OF RACIST COMMENTS FROM SOME OLD RON PAUL NEWSLETTERS...
ISN'T THAT OLD NEWS?
AND WASN'T IT JUST A HANDFUL OF LINES TAKEN OUT OF CONTEXT OR SOMETHING?
PSSSSS...
THIS IS NEW STUFF, I'M TOLD, AND A LOT OF IT...
REAL NASTY STUFF, TOO, LIKE ACCUSING M.L. KING OF BEING A GAY PEDOPHILE AND WHATNOT...
ANYHOW, MY BOSSES WANT ME TO ASK THE PAUL CAMPAIGN ABOUT IT A.S.A.P...
MAP OF NEW HAM
OY. SOUNDS LIKE FUN...
—ARRRGH... THERE ARE NO STREET SIGNS IN THIS STUPID STATE...
WHAT DOES NEW HAMPSHIRE HAVE AGAINST ROADS?!
BACK AT OUR HOTEL, WE DISCUSSED THIS LATEST BROUHAHA WITH ANOTHER REPORTER WHOSE ROOM WE WERE CRASHING IN...*
I JUST READ THE NEW REPUBLIC PIECE ON-LINE...
FACE IT, YOU TWO— YOUR MAN IS A RACIST.
BUT PEOPLE WHO KNOW HIM SAY HE'S NOTHING OF THE SORT!
AND YOU DON'T KNOW IF HE WROTE ALL THAT STUFF HIMSELF...
RON'S ON LENO AS WE SPEAK!
TYPITY TYPITY TYPE...
TYPITY
YOUNG PEOPLE ARE RESPONDING TO MY MESSAGE OF FREEDOM!
TYPE TYPE...
*HOTEL ROOMS ARE HARD TO COME BY IN A PRIMARY STATE!
WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES THAT MAKE?
WOULD YOU ALLOW SHIT LIKE THAT TO GO OUT UNDER YOUR NAME FOR 20 YEARS?!
AND WOULDN'T SOMEONE POINT IT OUT TO YOU IMMEDIATELY IF YOU DIDN'T KNOW?
ESPECIALLY IF YOU'RE A POLITICIAN?
ER, I, UH...
GOOD POINT.
DUNKIN DONUTS
RON PAUL, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!
THE NEXT DAY (ELECTION DAY), DAVID AND I MET UP WITH PAUL, HIS FAMILY, AND SOME OF HIS STAFF FOR LUNCH...
(RON'S PEOPLE REFUSE TO DISCUSS THE NEWSLETTERS WITH ME)...
(WHILE RON HIMSELF CONTINUES TO INSIST HE DIDN'T WRITE ANY OF IT AND DOESN'T KNOW WHO DID)...
HI, I'M RAND PAUL, RON'S SON...
YOU TWO ARE WITH REASON? GREAT MAGAZINE!
PLEASE, HAVE A SEAT!
HI..
THANKS!
RON AND HIS FAMILY WERE SO WARM AND FRIENDLY THAT IT MADE IT HARD TO PUSH THE NEWSLETTER BUSINESS, SO INSTEAD WE ENGAGED IN SMALL TALK...
YOUR TONIGHT SHOW APPEARANCE WENT WELL, IT SEEMED...
INDEED! AND WHAT A NICE MAN THAT JAY LENO IS!
IT'S TOO BAD YOU DIDN'T HAVE A CELEBRITY SIDEKICK TO BRING ON THE SHOW WITH YOU.
?!? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?



*RON PAUL IS THE ONLY CANDIDATE WHO'S ON RECORD AS VOTING AGAINST BOTH. HEY, I'M JUST SAYIN'!

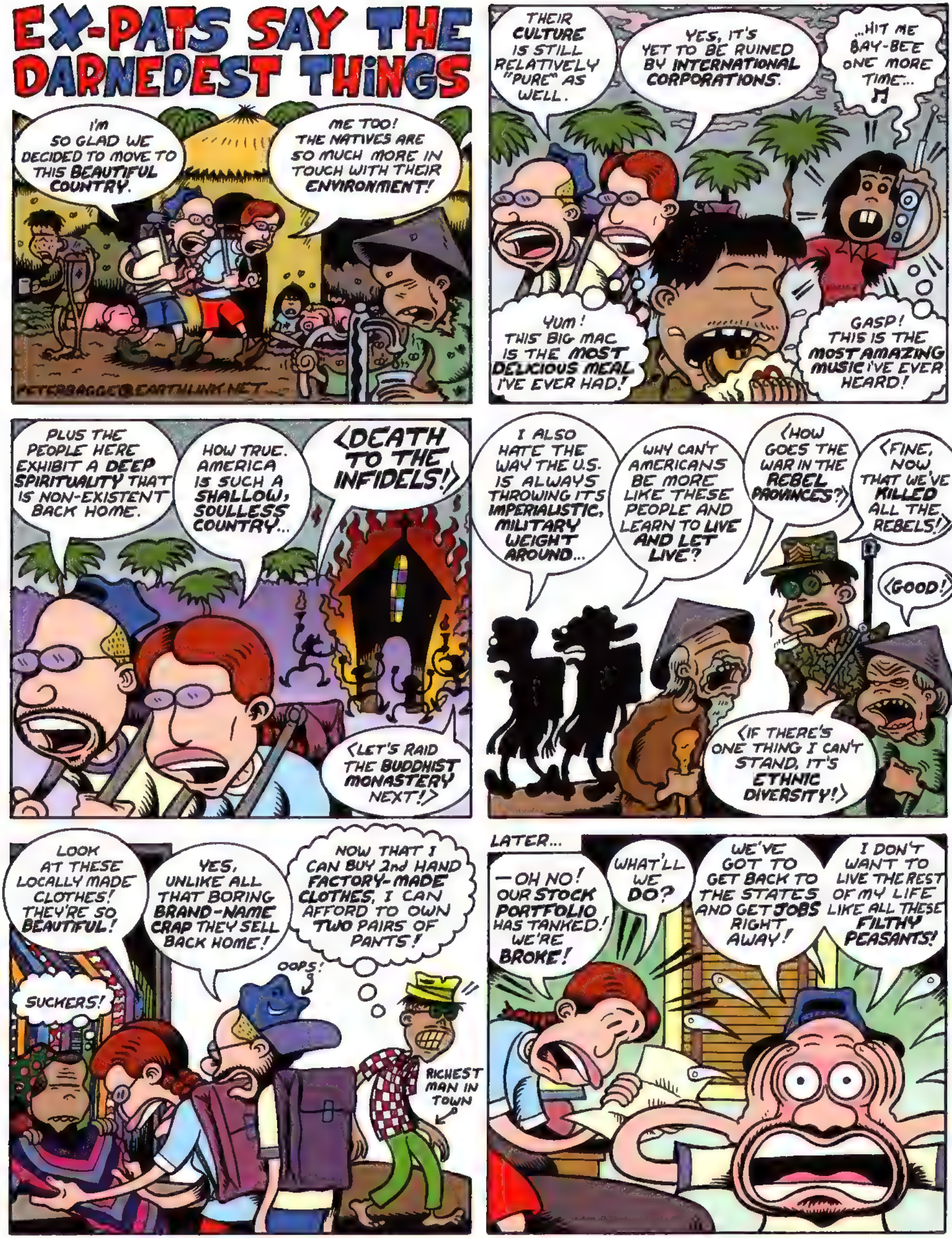
WHEN LIBERTARIANS GATHER...

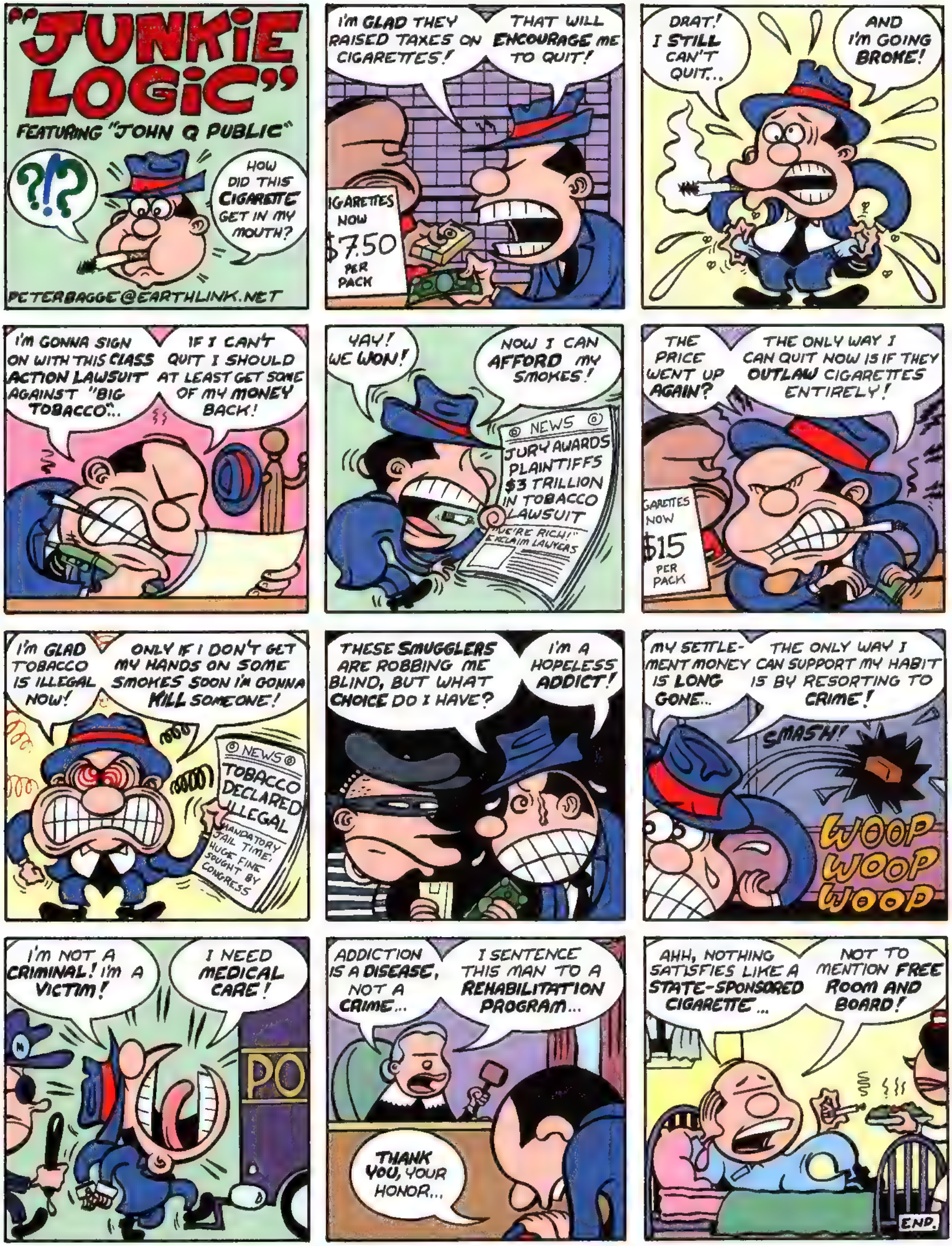
PETERBAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET

OUR
STUPID
COUNTRY

WHO'S TO BLAME FOR 9/11?

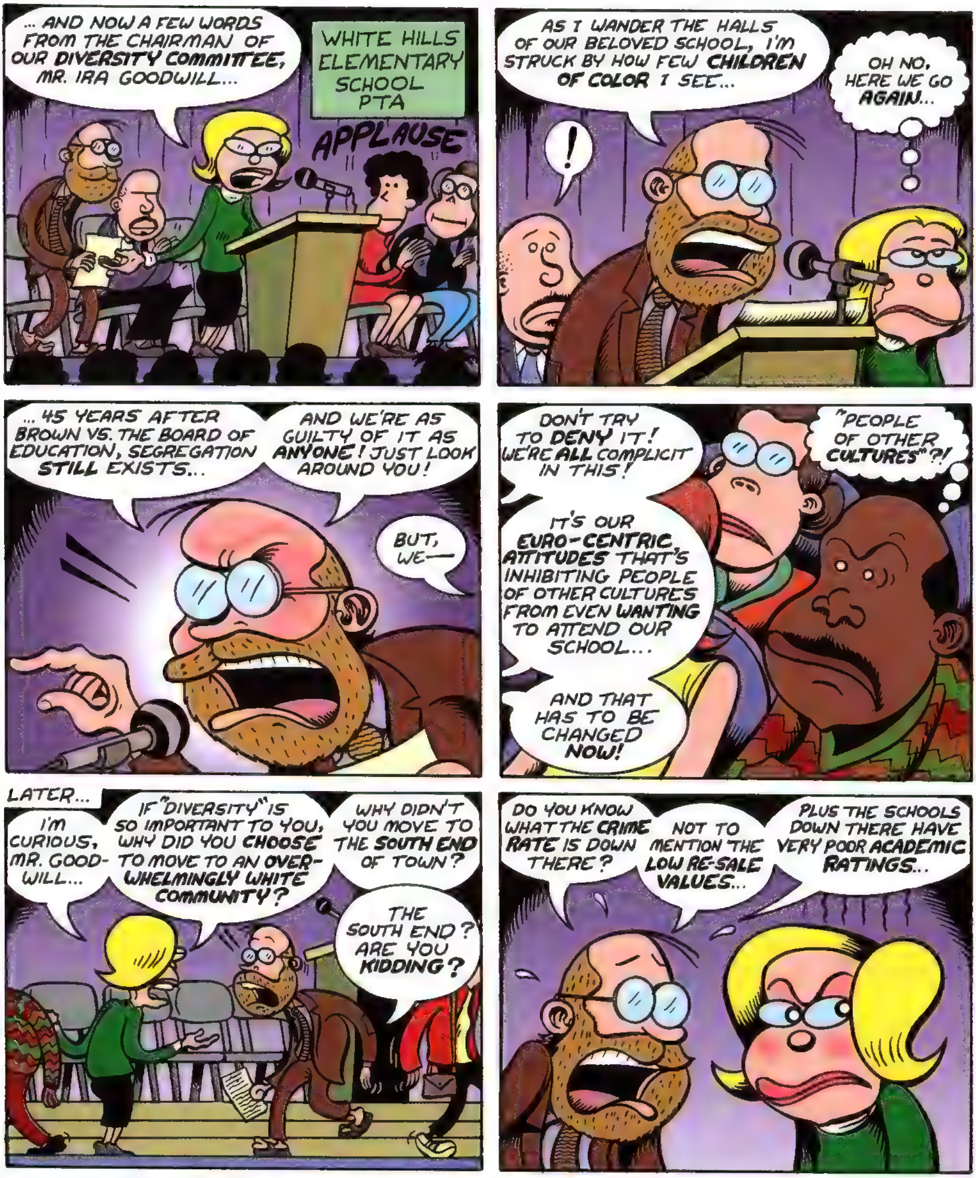
PRECONCEIVED NOTIONS NEVER DIE—OR FADE AWAY! BY P. BAGGE '02 (PETERBAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET)


EX-PATS SAY THE DARNEDEST THINGS
I'M SO GLAD WE DECIDED TO MOVE TO THIS BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY.
ME TOO! THE NATIVES ARE SO MUCH MORE IN TOUCH WITH THEIR ENVIRONMENT!
PETERBAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET
THEIR CULTURE IS STILL RELATIVELY "PURE" AS WELL.
YES, IT'S YET TO BE RUINED BY INTERNATIONAL CORPORATIONS.
...HIT ME BAY-BEE ONE MORE TIME...
YUM! THIS BIG MAC IS THE MOST DELICIOUS MEAL I'VE EVER HAD!
GASP! THIS IS THE MOST AMAZING MUSIC I'VE EVER HEARD!
PLUS THE PEOPLE HERE EXHIBIT A DEEP SPIRITUALITY THAT IS NON-EXISTENT BACK HOME.
HOW TRUE. AMERICA IS SUCH A SHALLOW, SOULLESS COUNTRY...
‹DEATH TO THE INFIDELS!›
‹LET'S RAID THE BUDDHIST MONASTERY NEXT!›
I ALSO HATE THE WAY THE U.S. IS ALWAYS THROWING IT'S IMPERIALISTIC, MILITARY WEIGHT AROUND...
WHY CAN'T AMERICANS BE MORE LIKE THESE PEOPLE AND LEARN TO LIVE AND LET LIVE?
‹HOW GOES THE WAR IN THE REBEL PROVINCES?›
‹FINE. NOW THAT WE'VE KILLED ALL THE REBELS!›
‹GOOD!›
‹IF THERE'S ONE THING I CAN'T STAND, IT'S ETHNIC DIVERSITY!›
LOOK AT THESE LOCALLY MADE CLOTHES! THEY'RE SO BEAUTIFUL!
YES, UNLIKE ALL THAT BORING BRAND-NAME CRAP THEY SELL BACK HOME!
NOW THAT I CAN BUY 2nd HAND FACTORY-MADE CLOTHES, I CAN AFFORD TO OWN TWO PAIRS OF PANTS!
SUCKERS!
OOPS!
RICHEST MAN IN TOWN
LATER...
—OH NO! OUR STOCK PORTFOLIO HAS TANKED! WE'RE BROKE!
WHAT'LL WE DO?
WE'VE GOT TO GET BACK TO THE STATES AND GET JOBS RIGHT AWAY!
I DON'T WANT TO LIVE THE REST OF MY LIFE LIKE ALL THESE FILTHY PEASANTS!


"JUNKIE LOGIC"
FEATURING "JOHN Q PUBLIC"
?!?
HOW DID THIS CIGARETTE GET IN MY MOUTH?
PETERBAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET
I'M GLAD THEY RAISED TAXES ON CIGARETTES!
THAT WILL ENCOURAGE ME TO QUIT!
CIGARETTES NOW $7.50 PER PACK
DRAT! I STILL CAN'T QUIT...
AND I'M GOING BROKE!
I'M GONNA SIGN ON WITH THIS CLASS ACTION LAWSUIT AGAINST "BIG TOBACCO"...
IF I CAN'T QUIT I SHOULD AT LEAST GET SOME OF MY MONEY BACK!
YAY! WE WON!
NOW I CAN AFFORD MY SMOKES!
NEWS
JURY AWARDS PLAINTIFFS $3 TRILLION IN TOBACCO LAWSUIT
"WE'RE RICH!" EXCLAIM LAWYERS
THE PRICE WENT UP AGAIN?
THE ONLY WAY I CAN QUIT NOW IS IF THEY OUTLAW CIGARETTES ENTIRELY!
GARETTES NOW $15 PER PACK
I'M GLAD TOBACCO IS ILLEGAL NOW!
ONLY IF I DON'T GET MY HANDS ON SOME SMOKES SOON I'M GONNA KILL SOMEONE!
NEWS
TOBACCO DECLARED ILLEGAL
MANDATORY JAIL TIME; HUGE FINE SOUGHT BY CONGRESS
THESE SMUGGLERS ARE ROBBING ME BLIND, BUT WHAT CHOICE DO I HAVE?
I'M A HOPELESS ADDICT!
MY SETTLEMENT MONEY IS LONG GONE...
THE ONLY WAY I CAN SUPPORT MY HABIT IS BY RESORTING TO CRIME!
SMASH!
WOOP WOOP WOOP
I'M NOT A CRIMINAL! I'M A VICTIM!
I NEED MEDICAL CARE!
PO
ADDICTION IS A DISEASE, NOT A CRIME...
I SENTENCE THIS MAN TO A REHABILITATION PROGRAM...
THANK YOU, YOUR HONOR...
AHH, NOTHING SATISFIES LIKE A STATE-SPONSORED CIGARETTE...
NOT TO MENTION FREE ROOM AND BOARD!
END.

CELEBRATE DIVERSITY (AT LEAST IN THEORY)

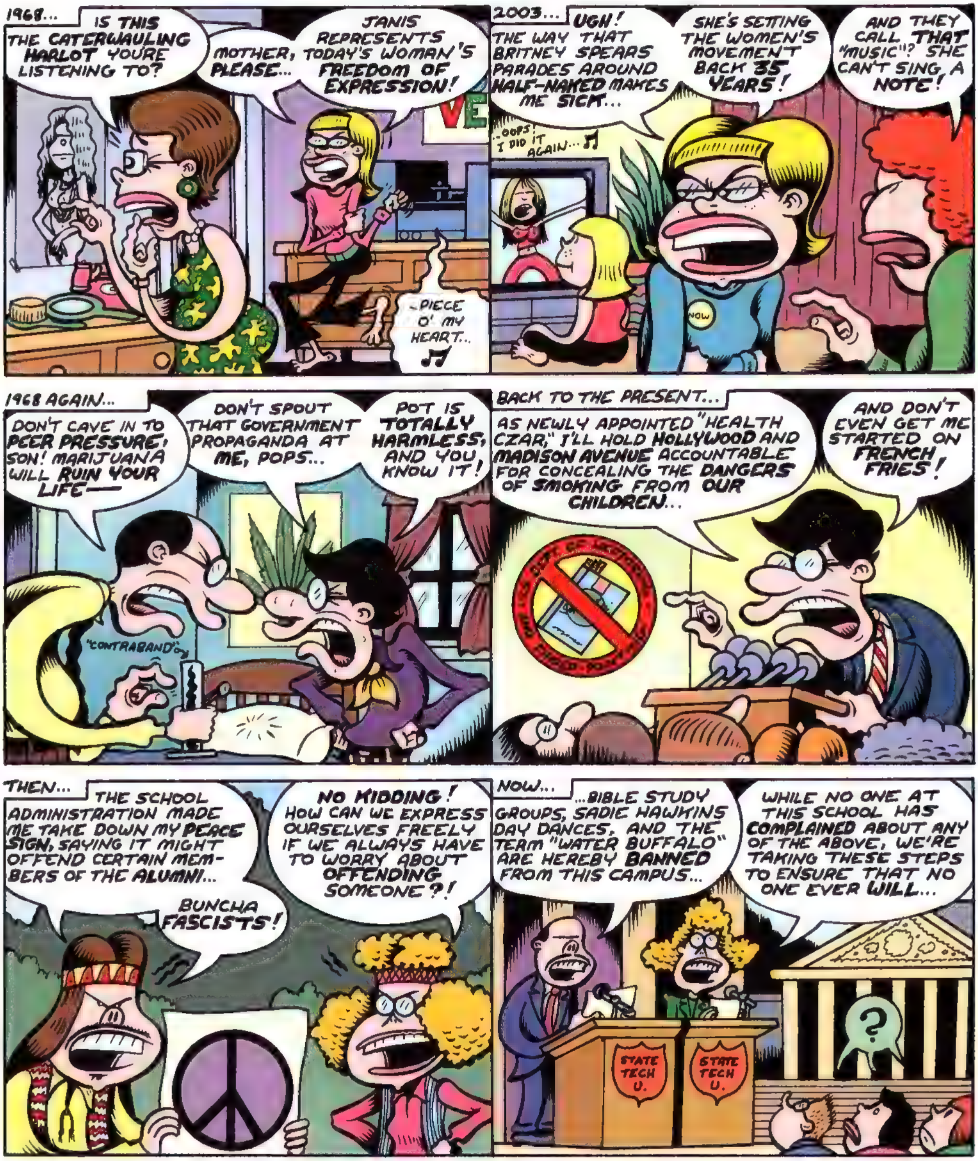
©2001 BY P. BAGGE (PETERBAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET)



DO YOUR OWN THING UNTO OTHERS

CELEBRATING 35 YEARS OF BABY BOOMER TYRANNY

BY PETE "I BASH BECAUSE I CARE" BAGGE (PETERBAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET)



ACTS OF CONTRITION

PETERBAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET

PRINCIPAL STALIN
JUST CALL ME "UNCLE JOE," KIDS.
in "IT'S ALL ABOUT THE CHILDREN"
PETERBAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET
W-WHY, PRINCIPAL STALIN! TO WHAT DO WE OWE THE PLEASURE—
I RECEIVED AN ANONYMOUS TIP THAT WE HAVE A SOCIOPATH IN OUR MIDST...
A-HA! SO YOU WERE ABOUT TO GO ON A HOMICIDAL RAMPAGE! AND HERE'S THE PROOF!
BUT IT'S JUST A DRAWING OF SPONGEBOB SQUARE-PANTS...
YES, A DEAD SPONGE-BOB!
YOU CLEARLY HAVE LITTLE REGARD FOR HUMAN LIFE!
I'M JUST SICK OF THAT SHOW, IS ALL...
DEATH TO SPONGEBOB!
AND HE CLEARLY ISN'T A HUMAN!
SPARE ME THE SEMANTICS, YOUNG LADY! YOU ARE HEREBY EXPELLED FROM THIS SCHOOL!
BUT SHE'S ONE OF OUR BRIGHTEST PUPILS...
PRECISELY! IT'S THE SMART ONES YOU'VE GOT TO WATCH OUT FOR!
—EVERYONE DOWN ON THE FLOOR—NOW!
AHH, THE DRUG RAID IS RIGHT ON TIME, I SEE...
A "DRUG RAID"?
BASH!
D-DON'T YOU THINK THAT'S A BIT...HEAVY-HANDED?
THE SURVEILLANCE MONITOR IN THE GIRLS' LOCKER ROOM CLEARLY SHOWED ONE STUDENT PASSING A JOINT TO ANOTHER!
A JOINT? ARE YOU SURE IT WASN'T A TAMPON?
I'VE REVIEWED THAT TAPE MANY TIMES, AND I'M POSITIVE!
STILL, I THINK YOU MAY HAVE GONE TOO FAR THIS TIME...
NONSENSE! I REFUSE TO COMPROMISE WHEN IT COMES TO PROTECTING THE CHILDREN!
YOU JUMP WHEN I GIVE YOU AN ORDER! GOT ME?
Y-YES, SIR...
BUT LOOK, THAT POOR BOY IS SO TERRIFIED HE'S WETTING HIMSELF!
OOH, THAT REMINDS ME...
...I ALMOST FORGOT TO GIVE THE CHESS CLUB THEIR RANDOM DRUG TESTS!

FAIR-WEATHER IDEALISTS

©2001 BY PETER "IT TAKES ONE TO KNOW ONE" BAGGE (PETERBAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET)

"...OR DON'T YOU CARE?"

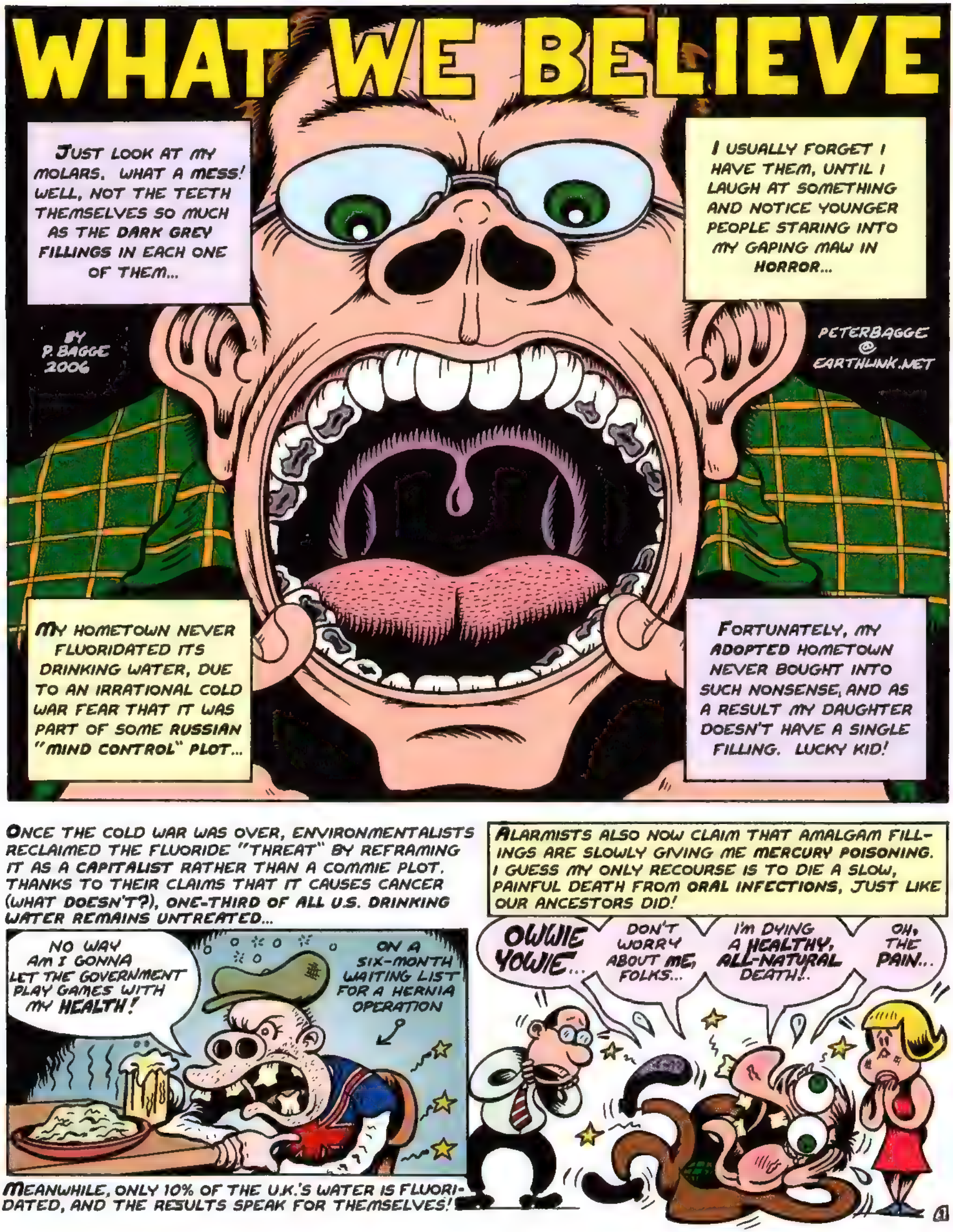
LOGICAL PROPOSALS FOR TAXING AWAY ALL OF SOCIETY'S ILLS

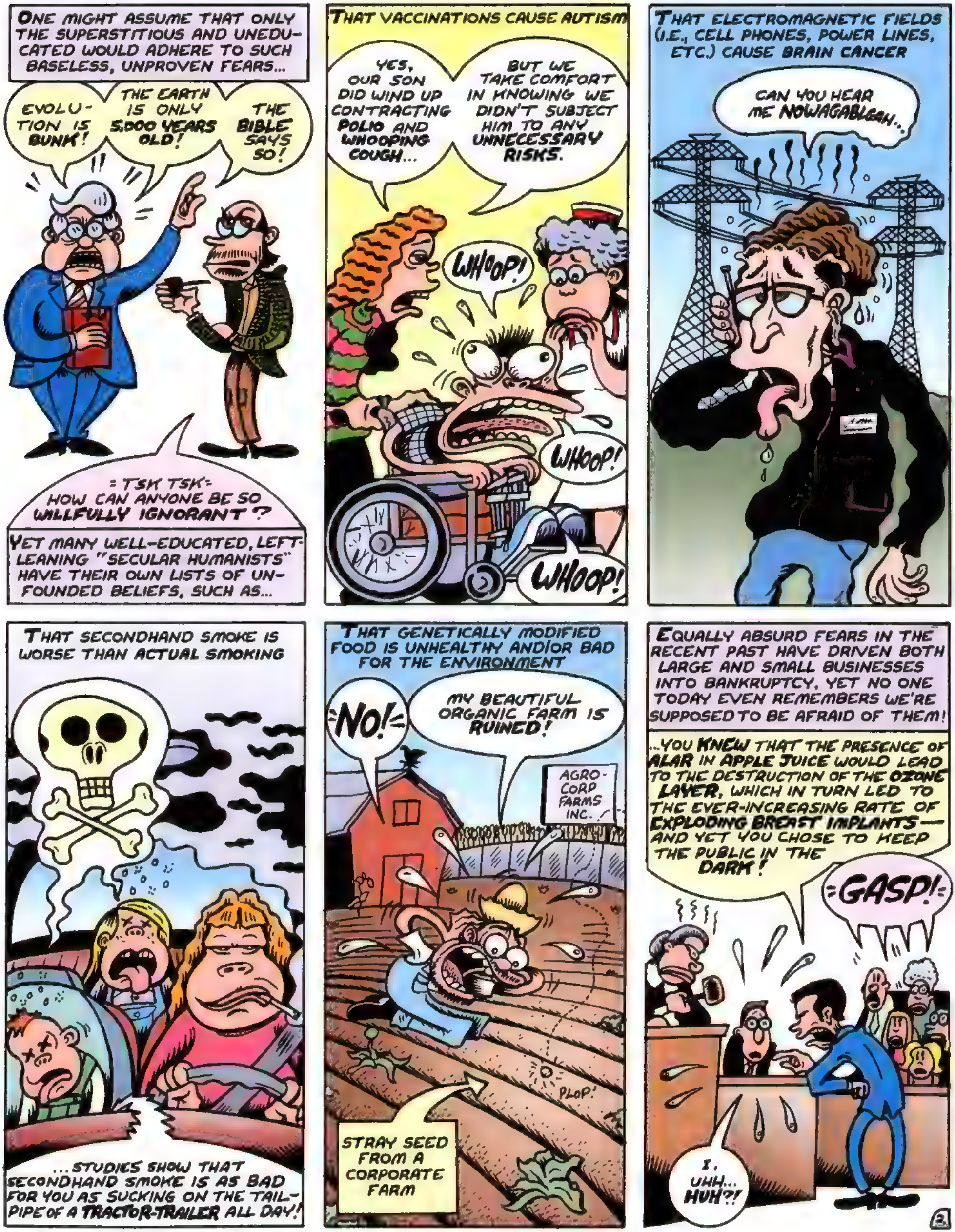
PETERBAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET

THE NERD-IFICATION OF AMERICA

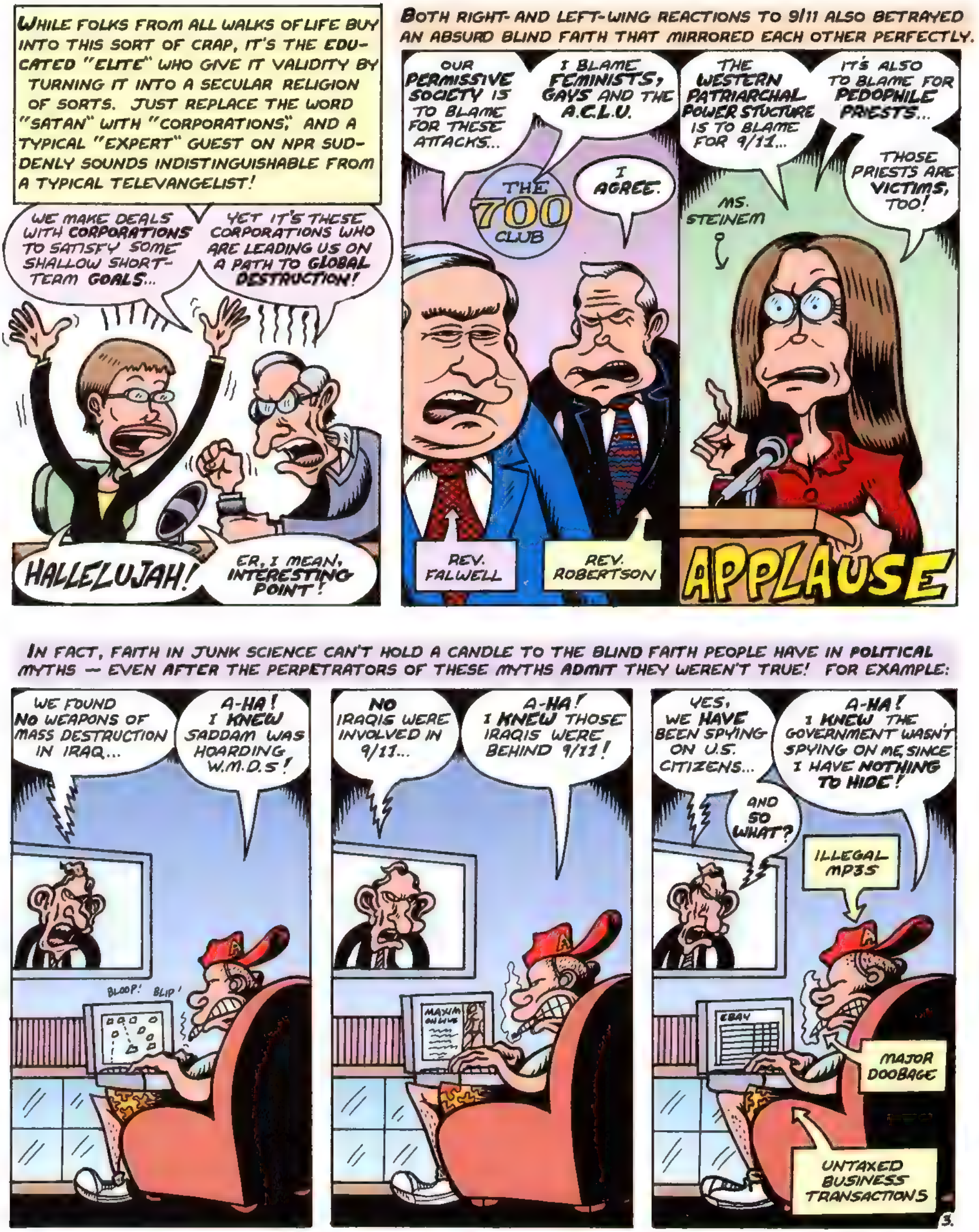
PETERBAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET

LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX
HIGHLIGHTS FROM A FIFTH GRADE PARENT/STUDENT/TEACHER MEETING ON "FAMILY LIVING AND SEXUAL HEATH," AS WITNESSED BY PETER BAGGE ©2001 (PETERBAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET)
...OKAY GIRLS, LET'S TELL YOUR PARENTS ABOUT ALL THE WONDERFUL, BEAUTIFUL, MAGICAL THINGS THAT WILL HAPPEN TO YOUR BODIES AS YOU ENTER PUBERTY...
YOU MEAN LIKE PERIODS?
AND PIMPLES?
WE'RE GOING TO ILLUSTRATE ALL THE CHANGES A GIRL WILL GO THROUGH AS SHE ENTERS JUNIOR HIGH ON THIS LOVELY LADY...
?!? "LOVELY"?
OH BOY! MAKEOVER TIME!
...UH, MOM AND DAD, TO TURN AROUND WHILE I DRAW THE NAUGHTY BITS...
?
!
AND THE RESULTS ARE IN...
TATTOOS?!? ON A MIDDLE SCHOOLER?
UH-HUH! AND SHE STAYS OUT PAST MIDNIGHT AS WELL!
...Y-YOU GIRLS NEED TO RESIST THE PRESSURE TO CONFORM TO SOCIETY'S NARROW CONCEPT OF "BEAUTY"...
I CAN'T DECIDE IF HER EYESHADOW MATCHES HER HALTER TOP.
Q + A TIME...
...WERE YOU ABLE TO TALK WITH YOUR PARENTS ABOUT SEX?
HELL, NO!
OH MAN, IT'S NO WONDER I'M SUCH A MESS!
MEANWHILE, IN THE BOYS' CLASS...
...DURING OVULATION, THE EGG PASSES THROUGH THE FALLOPIAN TUBES...
?
DON'T LOOK AT ME!
HEY, WHO TOOK MY GAMEBOY?
I FEEL SICK...

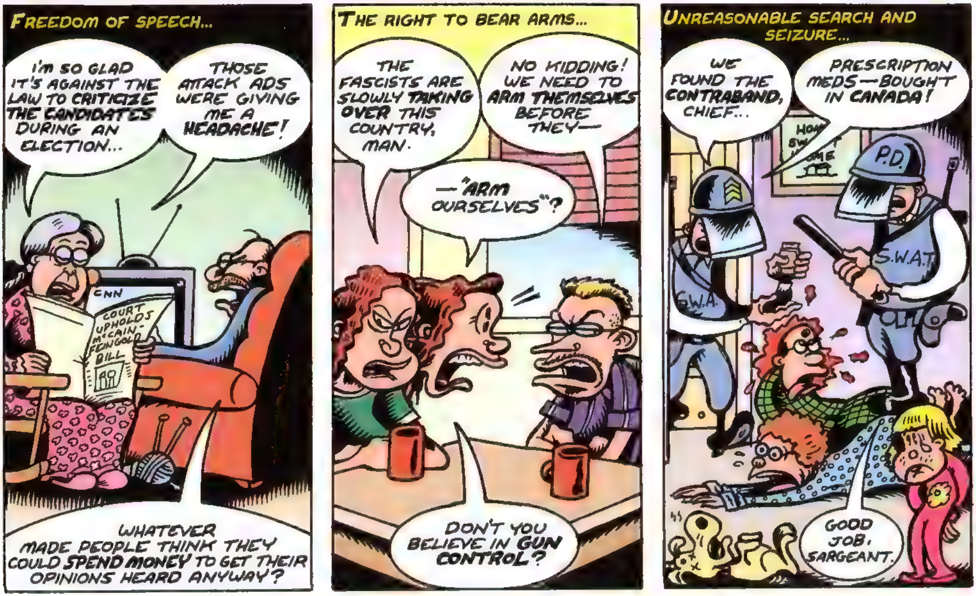

WHAT WE BELIEVE
JUST LOOK AT MY MOLARS. WHAT A MESS! WELL, NOT THE TEETH THEMSELVES SO MUCH AS THE DARK GREY FILLINGS IN EACH ONE OF THEM...
I USUALLY FORGET I HAVE THEM, UNTIL I LAUGH AT SOMETHING AND NOTICE YOUNGER PEOPLE STARING INTO MY GAPING MAW IN HORROR...
BY P. BAGGE 2006
PETERBAGGE @ EARTHLINK.NET
MY HOMETOWN NEVER FLUORIDATED ITS DRINKING WATER, DUE TO AN IRRATIONAL COLD WAR FEAR THAT IT WAS PART OF SOME RUSSIAN "MIND CONTROL" PLOT...
FORTUNATELY, MY ADOPTED HOMETOWN NEVER BOUGHT INTO SUCH NONSENSE, AND AS A RESULT MY DAUGHTER DOESN'T HAVE A SINGLE FILLING. LUCKY KID!
ONCE THE COLD WAR WAS OVER, ENVIRONMENTALISTS RECLAIMED THE FLUORIDE "THREAT" BY REFRAMING IT AS A CAPITALIST RATHER THAN A COMMIE PLOT. THANKS TO THEIR CLAIMS THAT IT CAUSES CANCER (WHAT DOESN'T?), ONE-THIRD OF ALL U.S. DRINKING WATER REMAINS UNTREATED...
NO WAY AM I GONNA LET THE GOVERNMENT PLAY GAMES WITH MY HEALTH!
ON A SIX-MONTH WAITING LIST FOR A HERNIA OPERATION
MEANWHILE, ONLY 10% OF THE U.K.'S WATER IS FLUORIDATED, AND THE RESULTS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES!
ALARMISTS ALSO NOW CLAIM THAT AMALGAM FILLINGS ARE SLOWLY GIVING ME MERCURY POISONING. I GUESS MY ONLY RECOURSE IS TO DIE A SLOW, PAINFUL DEATH FROM ORAL INFECTIONS, JUST LIKE OUR ANCESTORS DID!
OWWIE YOWIE...
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME, FOLKS...
I'M DYING A HEALTHY, ALL-NATURAL DEATH!..
OH, THE PAIN...
1



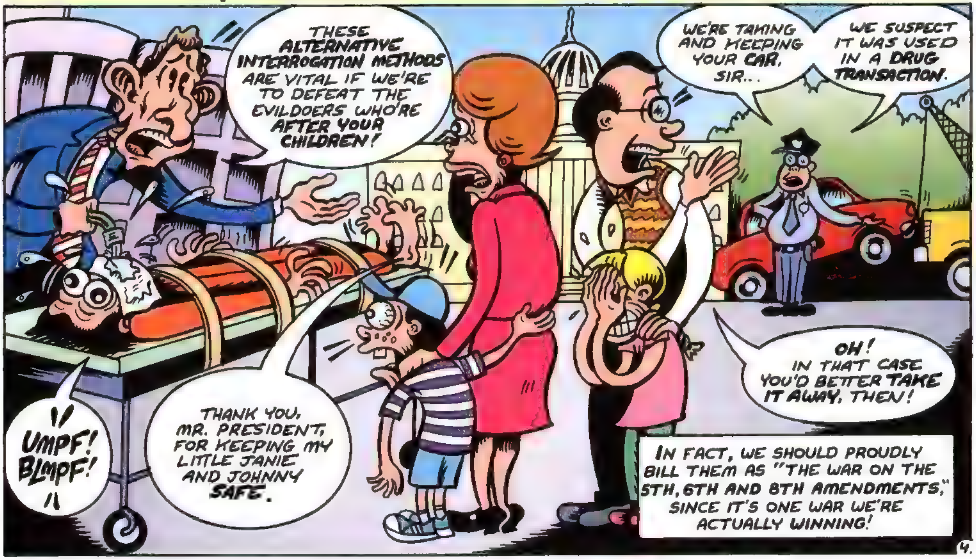
ONE MIGHT ASSUME THAT ONLY THE SUPERSTITIOUS AND UNEDUCATED WOULD ADHERE TO SUCH BASELESS, UNPROVEN FEARS...
EVOLUTION IS BUNK!
THE EARTH IS ONLY 5,000 YEARS OLD!
THE BIBLE SAYS SO!
TSK TSK
HOW CAN ANYONE BE SO WILLFULLY IGNORANT?
YET MANY WELL-EDUCATED, LEFT-LEANING "SECULAR HUMANISTS" HAVE THEIR OWN LISTS OF UNFOUNDED BELIEFS, SUCH AS...
THAT VACCINATIONS CAUSE AUTISM
YES, OUR SON DID WIND UP CONTRACTING POLIO AND WHOOPING COUGH...
BUT WE TAKE COMFORT IN KNOWING WE DIDN'T SUBJECT HIM TO ANY UNNECESSARY RISKS.
WHOOP!
WHOOP!
WHOOP!
THAT ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELDS (I.E., CELL PHONES, POWER LINES, ETC.) CAUSE BRAIN CANCER
CAN YOU HEAR ME NOWAGABLGAH...
THAT SECONDHAND SMOKE IS WORSE THAN ACTUAL SMOKING
...STUDIES SHOW THAT SECONDHAND SMOKE IS AS BAD FOR YOU AS SUCKING ON THE TAILPIPE OF A TRACTOR-TRAILER ALL DAY!
THAT GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOOD IS UNHEALTHY AND/OR BAD FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
NO!
MY BEAUTIFUL ORGANIC FARM IS RUINED!
AGRO-CORP FARMS INC.
PLOP!
STRAY SEED FROM A CORPORATE FARM
EQUALLY ABSURD FEARS IN THE RECENT PAST HAVE DRIVEN BOTH LARGE AND SMALL BUSINESSES INTO BANKRUPTCY, YET NO ONE TODAY EVEN REMEMBERS WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE AFRAID OF THEM!
...YOU KNEW THAT THE PRESENCE OF ALAR IN APPLE JUICE WOULD LEAD TO THE DESTRUCTION OF THE OZONE LAYER, WHICH IN TURN LED TO THE EVER-INCREASING RATE OF EXPLODING BREAST IMPLANTS— AND YET YOU CHOSE TO KEEP THE PUBLIC IN THE DARK!
GASP!
I, UHH... HUH?!
2


WHILE FOLKS FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE BUY INTO THIS SORT OF CRAP, IT'S THE EDUCATED "ELITE" WHO GIVE IT VALIDITY BY TURNING IT INTO A SECULAR RELIGION OF SORTS. JUST REPLACE THE WORD "SATAN" WITH "CORPORATIONS," AND A TYPICAL "EXPERT" GUEST ON NPR SUDDENLY SOUNDS INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM A TYPICAL TELEVANGELIST!
WE MAKE DEALS WITH CORPORATIONS TO SATISFY SOME SHALLOW SHORT-TERM GOALS...
YET IT'S THESE CORPORATIONS WHO ARE LEADING US ON A PATH TO GLOBAL DESTRUCTION!
HALLELUJAH!
ER, I MEAN, INTERESTING POINT!
BOTH RIGHT- AND LEFT-WING REACTIONS TO 9/11 ALSO BETRAYED AN ABSURD BLIND FAITH THAT MIRRORED EACH OTHER PERFECTLY.
OUR PERMISSIVE SOCIETY IS TO BLAME FOR THESE ATTACKS...
I BLAME FEMINISTS, GAYS AND THE A.C.L.U.
I AGREE.
THE 700 CLUB
REV. FALWELL
REV. ROBERTSON
THE WESTERN PATRIARCHAL POWER STUCTURE IS TO BLAME FOR 9/11...
IT'S ALSO TO BLAME FOR PEDOPHILE PRIESTS...
THOSE PRIESTS ARE VICTIMS, TOO!
MS. STEINEM
APPLAUSE
IN FACT, FAITH IN JUNK SCIENCE CAN'T HOLD A CANDLE TO THE BLIND FAITH PEOPLE HAVE IN POLITICAL MYTHS — EVEN AFTER THE PERPETRATORS OF THESE MYTHS ADMIT THEY WEREN'T TRUE! FOR EXAMPLE:
WE FOUND NO WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION IN IRAQ...
A-HA! I KNEW SADDAM WAS HOARDING W.M.D.S!
BLOOP! BLIP!
NO IRAQIS WERE INVOLVED IN 9/11...
A-HA! I KNEW THOSE IRAQIS WERE BEHIND 9/11!
MAXIM ONLINE
YES, WE HAVE BEEN SPYING ON U.S. CITIZENS...
AND SO WHAT?
A-HA! I KNEW THE GOVERNMENT WASN'T SPYING ON ME, SINCE I HAVE NOTHING TO HIDE!
ILLEGAL MP3S
EBAY
MAJOR DOOBAGE
UNTAXED BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS

THEN THERE'S A LITTLE SOMETHING WE AMERICANS NO LONGER BELIEVE IN, NAMELY THE BILL OF RIGHTS. TO WIT:



DUE PROCESS, PRIVATE PROPERTY, A SPEEDY TRIAL, NO SELF-INCRIMINATION, NO CRUEL AND UNUSUAL PUNISHMENT — APPARENTLY ALL OF THESE NOBLE CONCEPTS ARE PART OF SOME GENTEEL, ANTIQUATED PAST, THANKS TO OUR "WAR ON DRUGS" AND "WAR ON TERROR"...



"What We Believe" (This Month, Anyway)

PETER BAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET

IN PRAISE OF MEANINGLESS CRAP

PETERBAGGE@EARTHLINK.NET

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS
7563 Lake City Way NE
Seattle WA 98115

All stories written and drawn by Peter Bagge
Colored by Joanne Bagge and Peter Bagge
"Tales of the Exploited" and "Christian Rock" inked by Eric Reynolds

Edited by Kim Thompson
Production by Paul Baresh
Promotion by Eric Reynolds
Gary Groth and Kim Thompson, publishers

This material was previously published in *Reason Magazine* from 2001 to 2008.

All contents © 2009 Peter Bagge, except introduction © 2009 Nick Gillespie.
This edition is copyright © 2009 Fantagraphics Books, Inc. All rights reserved.
Permission to quote or reproduce material for reviews or notices must be obtained from Fantagraphics Books, in writing, at 7563 Lake City Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115. Copyright Peter Bagge and *Reason Magazine*.

For more books by Peter Bagge, including *Buddy Does Seattle* and *Buddy Does Jersey* (collecting the legendary *Hate* comics), visit Fantagraphics.com. Also be sure to visit ReasonMagazine.com and PeterBagge.com!

Distributed in the U.S. by W.W. Norton and Company, Inc. (212-354-5500)
Distributed in Canada by Canadian Manda Group (416-516-0911)
Distributed in the United Kingdom by Turnaround Distribution (208-829-3009)

First edition: May, 2009. Printed in China.

ISBN: 978-1-60699-158-9

$16.99 ISBN 978-1-60699-158-9

Peter Bagge, creator of the best-selling *Hate* comics, trains his comedic guns on the reality of our crazy new century. Originally published in *Reason* magazine, these never-before-collected strips combine the best aspects of Bagge's classic "Buddy Bradley" graphic novels, the scrupulously reported "comics journalism" of cartoonists like Joe (*Palestine*) Sacco, and full-on stand-up-comedy-type rants.

Topics include the erosion of our civil liberties, ongoing boondoggles on the American public, the Iraq war, so-called art and so-called entertainment, the homeless, the mall-ification of America, politicians both in general and in particular, the conservative/religious war on sex and drugs, and whether citizens should be allowed to own bazookas. Each piece features the voluble Bagge himself front and center as the puzzled, indignant, or deeply conflicted everyman-on-the-street trying to make sense of the world.

"Like all good political cartoonists, Bagge can be cruel. But he's also willing to skewer himself when he deserves it… as libertarian polemicists go, he's a lot more fun than, say, Ayn Rand."
—THE WASHINGTON POST

$16.99 ISBN 978-1-60699-158-9

Peter Bagge, creator of the best-selling *Hate* comics, trains his comedic guns on the reality of our crazy new century. Originally published in *Reason* magazine, these never-before-collected strips combine the best aspects of Bagge's classic "Buddy Bradley" graphic novels, the scrupulously reported "comics journalism" of cartoonists like Joe (*Palestine*) Sacco, and full-on stand-up-comedy-type rants.

Topics include the erosion of our civil liberties, ongoing boondoggles on the American public, the Iraq war, so-called art and so-called entertainment, the homeless, the mall-ification of America, politicians both in general and in particular, the conservative/religious war on sex and drugs, and whether citizens should be allowed to own bazookas. Each piece features the voluble Bagge himself front and center as the puzzled, indignant, or deeply conflicted everyman-on-the-street trying to make sense of the world.

"Like all good political cartoonists, Bagge can be cruel. But he's also willing to skewer himself when he deserves it... as libertarian polemicists go, he's a lot more fun than, say, Ayn Rand."
—THE WASHINGTON POST

PETER BAGGE

EVERYBODY IS STUPID EXCEPT FOR ME
AND OTHER ASTUTE OBSERVATIONS

FB

EVERYBODY IS STUPID EXCEPT FOR ME
AND OTHER ASTUTE OBSERVATIONS

A DECADE'S WORTH OF CARTOON REPORTING FOR REASON MAGAZINE